

**EUROPEAN INTEGRATION AND FOREIGN POLICY IN
CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE: THE CASES OF
HUNGARY, SLOVAKIA AND ROMANIA**

by

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Abstract

This thesis examines the impact of Europeanization on the foreign policy of the new member states of the European Union, using as case studies Hungary, Slovakia and Romania. It asks what the extent of Europeanization of foreign policy is and whether and to what extent there has been divergence in the way in which the new member states have responded to the similar constraints and opportunities of the European integration. Insofar as divergence can be identified, a third research question asks why there is policy divergence.

It argues that the governmental politics and the politics of national identity play a key role as mediating factors for the Europeanization of the system of policy making, the process of elite socialization and the conduct of foreign policy itself. Three critical international events are used as sub-case studies in order to assess the extent of Europeanization of foreign policy of the CEE countries: the US-led war in Iraq in 2003, the NATO airstrikes against Yugoslavia in 1999 and the Kosovo declaration of independence in 2008.

The study's findings suggest that the pressures of Europeanization leads to convergence in some policy areas, but domestic factors such as governmental and national identity politics offer a more convincing explanation of divergence. Overall, Europeanization is uneven not only across issue-areas, but also across countries. The limits of convergence as an outcome of Europeanization and the persistence of diversity are therefore best accounted for by the diversity of domestic factors.

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List of abbreviations

General Terms

OBSEC	Organization of Black Sea Economic Cooperation
CAP	Common Agricultural Policy
CEE	Central and Eastern Europe
CFSP	Common Foreign and Security Policy
CoE	Council of Europe
COREPER	Committee of Permanent Representatives/Comité des représentants permanents
CSAT	Consiliul Suprem de Apărare a Țării/Supreme Council of National Defence
CTK	Česká tisková kancelář/Czech News Agency
CVM	Cooperation and Verification Mechanism
DEI	Department of European Integration
EA	Europe Agreement
EC	European Community
EEAS	European External Action Service
EFTA	European Free Trade Association
ENP	European Neighbourhood Policy
EPC	European Political Cooperation
ESDP	European Security and Defence Policy
EU	European Union
EUFOR Chad	European Union Force Chad
EULEX	European Union Police and Rule of Law mission in Kosovo
FCO	Foreign and Commonwealth Office
GAERC/ CAGRE	General Affairs and External Relations Council/Conseil Affaires générales et relations extérieures
MKI/HIIA	Magyar Külügyi Intézet/Hungarian Institute of International Affairs
ICC	International Criminal Court
ICEI	Inter-ministerial Committee for European Integration
IOs	International Organizations
IVO/IPP	Inštitút pre verejné otázky/Institute for Public Policy/
KFOR	Kosovo Force
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MIER	Ministry of International Economic Relations
MIR	Ministry of International Relations
MIT	Ministry of Industry and Trade
MTI/HNA	Magyar Távirati Iroda/Hungarian News Agency
NATO	North Atlantic Alliance
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
PerRep(s)	Permanent Representation(s)
PMG	Political-Military Group
PSC/COPS	Political and Security Committee/Comité politique et de sécurité
SEA	Single European Act
SFPA	Slovak Foreign Policy Association/ Slovenská spoločnosť pre

SSEIER	zahraničnú politiku State Secretariat for Integration and External Economic Relations
SSI	State Secretariat for Integration
UN	United Nations
USA	United States of America

Political parties

Political Parties in Hungary

FiDeSz	Fiatal Demokraták Szövetsége/Alliance of Young Democrats
FKFP	Független Kisgazda, Földmunkás és Polgári Párt/Independent Smallholders, Agrarian Workers and Civic Party
KDNP	Kereszténydemokrata Néppárt/Christian Democratic Peoples' Party
MDF	Magyar Demokrata Fórum/Hungarian Democratic Forum
MSzMP	Magyar Szocialista Munkáspárt/Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party
MSzP	Magyar Szocialista Párt/Hungarian Socialist Party
SzDSz	Szabad Demokraták Szövetsége/Alliance of Free Democrats

Political Parties in Slovakia

ANO	Aliancia Nového Občana/New Citizen's Alliance
DS	Demokratická strana/Democratic Party
DÚ	Demokratická únia/Democratic Union
HZDS	Hnutie za demokratické Slovensko/Movement for a Democratic Slovakia
LS-HZDS	Ľudová strana–Hnutie za demokratické Slovensko/People's Party – Movement for a Democratic Slovakia
KDH	Kresťanskodemokratické hnutie/ Christian Democratic Movement
SDK	Slovenská demokratická koalícia/Slovak Democratic Coalition
SDL'	Strana demokratickej ľavice/Party of the Democratic Left
SDSS	Sociálnodemokratická strana Slovenska/Social Democratic Party of Slovakia
SMER-SD	Smer – sociálna demokracia
SMK/MKP	Strana maďarskej koalície/Magyar Koalíció Pártja/Party of Hungarian Coalition
SNS	Slovenská národná strana/Slovak National Party
SOP	Strana občianskeho porozumenia/Party of Civil Understanding
SZS	Strana zelených na Slovensku/Green Party in Slovakia
ZRS	Združenie robotníkov Slovenska/Association of Workers in Slovakia

Political Parties in Romania

CDR	Convenția Democrată Română/Romanian Democratic Convention
DA	Alianța Dreptate și Adevăr/The Justice and Truth Alliance
FDSN	Frontul Democrat al Salvării Naționale/Democratic National Salvation Front
FSN	Frontul Salvării Naționale/National Salvation Front

PD	Partidul Democrat/Democratic Party
PDL	Partidul Democrat Liberal/Democratic Liberal Party
PDSR	Partidul Democrației Sociale în România/ Party of Social Democracy in Romania
PNL	Partidul Național Liberal/National Liberal Party
PNȚCD	Partidul Național Țărănesc Creștin Democrat/Christian-Democratic National Peasants' Party
PRM	Partidul România Mare/Greater Romania Party
PSD	Partidul Social Democrat/Social Democratic Party
UDMR/ RMDSz	Uniunea Democrată a Maghiarilor din România/ Romániai Magyar Demokrata Szövetség/Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania
USD	Uniunea Social Democrată/Social Democratic Union

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION: FOREIGN POLICY IN THE 'NEW EUROPE' AND THE PROCESS OF EUROPEANIZATION

This thesis examines the impact of European integration on the foreign policy of the new member states of the European Union (EU) from Central and Eastern Europe (CEE). It first asks what is the extent of Europeanization of foreign policy and second whether and to what extent there has been convergence and/or divergence in the way in which the new member states have responded to the similar constraints and opportunities of the European integration. A third research question builds on the empirical findings of the second one and asks why there is policy divergence and how can it be explained.

This thesis argues that the extent to which national responses to Europeanization are divergent is primarily due to role of domestic factors, which filter and alter the direction and intensity of the inputs from the external environment. Although there are various domestic factors likely to make a difference, this thesis argues that the governmental politics and the politics of national identity are especially significant with regard to the eventual nature of national responses to Europeanization. These two factors play a key role when it comes to the way in which Europeanization affects the national systems of foreign policy-making and the conduct of foreign policy itself. This study looks at three outcomes of the Europeanization process, namely institutional adaptation, elite socialization and foreign policy conduct. Empirical evidence from Hungary, Slovakia and Romania substantiate the arguments of this thesis.

On the 1st January 2007, the European Union completed the CEE Enlargement with the accession of Bulgaria and Romania. This process, which began after the fall of the Iron Curtain, transformed the Union in terms of size, nature and inner dynamic. The

Enlargement was a process with deep consequences not only for the nature of the EU; it had a major transformative impact on the new member states too. There is no doubt that the Europeanization of the CEE countries during the last two decades affected in remarkable ways the nature of the polity, policies and politics of this region. This study aims to evaluate the extent to which the impact of the EU has transformed the national foreign policies of the new members. The CEE Enlargement provides an excellent opportunity and rich empirical material for scholars of European integration to investigate a variety of questions: what drives European integration, how the surrender of national sovereignty can be explained, what is the likely impact of Enlargement on the functioning of the European Union, how deep is the influence of Europeanization at domestic level and so on.

However, given the fact that the CEE Enlargement is a recent phenomenon, the accumulation of empirical knowledge with regard to the Europeanization of the new member states is still underdeveloped. While there is an abundant literature on the impact of Europeanization on the old member states, the same cannot be said about the new member states. This is one of the reasons why this thesis investigates the Europeanization of foreign policy in the new member states.

Another reason derives from the geography of EU Enlargement. European integration was initiated by a core group of six countries to which, in successive waves, other countries or groups of countries from the periphery tried to join. The perception of being the 'core' and being from the 'periphery' is important and suggests a dependency relation, a relation of power between those countries 'in' and those aspiring to be 'in' (on the centre-periphery debate, see also Featherstone and Kazamias, 2001: 2; Moutritzen, 1996: 286-92). Certainly, what was the periphery can be conceptualized in different ways, according to the motives for which the countries at the fringes tried to make their way in

and be part of the core. There are differences in the reasons why some of the former members of the European Free Trade Association (EFTA), such as the UK and Denmark in 1973 and Austria, Finland and Sweden in 1995, joined the European Community (EC), and the Southern members (although Portugal was itself a member of EFTA). In the first case, it was an economic calculation. The UK had set up the EFTA alongside other partner countries, the so-called 'Outer Seven', as a competing project to the 'Inner six' of the EC,¹ but abandoned it and joined the EC for the benefit of its greater market. For the Southern members, entering the EC was a way of escaping the authoritarian past and embarking on a modernization project. Similarly, for the CEE countries, EU integration was the way to return to Europe after half a century of isolation (as well as enjoying the economic benefits, the free movements of people and the greater political stature on the international stage given by the membership). However, despite different motives and historical contexts, the history of the Enlargement process illustrates the inherent power component of the relationship between those countries in and those out. Given these considerations, this thesis deems it important to examine how the perception of power affected the process of Europeanization of the new member states from CEE.

Moreover, the recent CEE Enlargement presents a unique opportunity given the sheer number of countries simultaneously following the same path, exposed to the same external influences, yet adjusting differently to the European mode of governance. At first glance, the CEE countries are more similar to each other than to some of the older member states. At the same time, the demands of European integration are the same for all candidate countries, reflected for instance in the need to satisfy the Copenhagen criteria and to adopt the legislation of the EC. The logical result of this equation would be that the

¹ The Times, 7 April 1961, 'Finland: Now, the Seven and a Half.'

transformative impact of European integration is similar across countries. The result would be institutional and policy convergence.

Empirical observations suggest that Europeanization produces not only convergence, but also divergence of policies (Harmsen, 1999: 107, Kassim, 2003: 102-6). At the same time, the persistence of different national institutional arrangements, political cultures, negotiating styles, and policy preference does not automatically lead to institutional and policy blockage at European level. In a way, this is the practical confirmation of the EU's motto, 'united in diversity'. In spite of a series of critical junctures, ranging from the 'Empty chair crisis' in the 1960s to the more recent debilitating saga of the ratification of the Constitutional Treaty and the revamped Lisbon Treaty, European integration has been advancing in an apparently unstoppable manner. Although the challenge of the current global economic crisis, unfolding during the writing up of this study, may derail the integration process, it does also contain the seeds for even greater economic integration and economic governance (however, it is not the aim of this thesis to explore these issues).

Yet, the question remains. How the co-existence of convergence and divergence can be explained? Furthermore, how is the persistence of diversity going to affect the process of European integration in an enlarged Union? Therefore, one of the aims of this thesis is to explore how the European integration affected domestic structures and policy processes in the new member states. This matter continues to be as relevant as ever due to the balance between enlarging the EU and deepening the European integration. Although the relationship between widening and deepening of the EU may be seen in trade-off terms, the fact is that one tends to complicate the other. In this sense, the CEE enlargement has complicated even more the process of deepening of the European integration. Future widening of the EU to include the Western Balkans countries and Turkey is likely to increase this complexity even further. Although, to a certain extent, the thorny problems of

widening of the EU and deepening the European integration have been settled for the time being in favour of the former, this state of affairs is mainly the consequence of previous commitments made to the Western Balkan countries and Turkey, and not due to an overriding enthusiasm in the member states for the idea of further expansion of the EU. Moreover, at the level of public opinion, the ‘enlargement fatigue’ and the growing euro-scepticism mean that the idea of further widening is currently as unpopular as that of deepening the EU.

At a political decision-making level, the problem of widening and increasing the diversity of an already diverse European Union is still on the table. While the accession of the CEE states and the two Mediterranean islands of Cyprus and Malta was completed, Croatia is about to join the club and negotiations are underway with Turkey. The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia is a candidate country although the negotiation talks have not started yet. The remaining Western Balkan countries have been offered the prospect of membership when they are ready. Furthermore, the Eastern European neighbours of Ukraine, Moldova, and Georgia are courting the EU, although no official promise has been provided yet and the current prospects for enlargement beyond the Western Balkan states look gloomy. At the same time, the unfavourable economic climate pushed a Eurosceptic country like Iceland to seek admission to the EU after decades of staying away from the integrationist pressures.

The problem of persisting diversity is even more relevant in the context of building the EU as a foreign policy actor, able to speak with a single voice and act unitarily and coherently. The variety of domestic preferences, including sub-national preferences (especially in the case of federal or quasi-federal states), still poses daunting problems of accommodation of diversity into a coherent policy and common political project. On the other hand, the domestic politics and policy-systems are under increased strain due to the

centripetal forces at the European level. Moreover, some authors perceived the nature of the relationship between the EU and the aspirant countries from CEE as a power relationship (see for instance Inotai, 2001, Janos, 2000, Mayhew, 1998, Smith, 2003); the conditionality associated with the enlargement process is one visible manifestation of it. The power relationship of this kind is more visible when looking at the pre-accession period. The accession or negotiation talk was a misnomer, hiding the reality of the bilateral relationship's asymmetry. The candidates could hardly influence the EU policy making; however, they had to adopt the EU norms in order to secure admission (Grabbe, 2003: 303). From a different point of view, as Andrew Janos remarked, the transition from communism to a Western type of capitalism and liberal democracy did not mean a shift from hierarchy to equality, but to a different form of hierarchy, described as a new hegemonic regime (Janos, 2000). This view may appear exaggerated since the integration to the EU of the former communist states was their own wilful option, not being imposed externally. Yet, this view opens the way for reflecting on the question of how the political elites from the new member states perceive the nature of the power game within the EU and how this perception translates into policy action.

For the former communist states, this problem is also linked to the freedom recently acquired after half a century of oppressive rule. Their foreign policy is the tool with which the newly regained sovereignty is expressed in relation to the outside world. Foreign policy is more than a collection of interests formulated by political elites and projected and defended outside by the policy machinery of the diplomats and foreign service; it also reflects distinct identity conceptions, which specify relations of belonging and exclusion and give meaning to policy priorities, content and tools. The study of foreign policy in this context implies the need to examine the transformative impact of European integration on polity structure, policy process, and the role of identity in the formulation of policy.

As indicated from the outset, this thesis emphasises the role domestic factors play in mediating and guiding the transformative impact of Europeanization. Some of the questions regularly raised in the literature on the Europeanization of foreign policy follow an inductive approach, usually asking whether Europeanization does affect national foreign policies, how does Europeanization affect national foreign policies or whether Europeanization produce convergence (Baun and Dan, 2009, Major 2005, Wong, 2006, 2007)? Both questions require an inductive research strategy of data collection. First, the researcher needs to collect data in order to decide whether the EU caused Europeanization or not. The second step is to identify the concrete ways in which the influence of the EU is translated into domestic change of policy, polity or politics. Following a similar approach, this thesis attempts to explore what is the extent of Europeanization of foreign policy in Hungary, Slovakia and Romania and whether and to what extent the Europeanization produces convergence and/or divergence. It does also attempt to deductively explain divergence with reference to the role of domestic factors. The thesis argues that governmental politics and the politics of national identity account for the differentiated impact of Europeanization across the three countries studied here, and by extension to other former candidate countries and current member states. Hence, it attempts to test the proposition that governmental politics and the politics of national identity account for the diversity of national responses to Europeanization.

At the other end of the analytical spectrum, the three outcomes (or the national responses) to be explained are institutional adjustment, elite socialization and the change of foreign policy conduct. Again, opting for these three dependent variables is due to the fact that previous studies on the Europeanization of foreign policy were focused on similar aspects, although without necessarily granting all three factors the same attention (for institutional adaptation, see among others Ágh, 1999, Bátora, 2003a, Allen and Oliver,

2006; for elite socialization and identity change, see Aggestam, 2004a, Pomorska, 2007, Schimmelfennig, 2000, Smith, 2004; for foreign policy conduct, see for instance Tonra, 2001, Torreblanca, 2001, Wong, 2006). The argument is that by using analogous analytical categories, the Europeanization research agenda can be expanded and the aim of comparing different political systems affected by Europeanization can be reached. Besides, these three categories target crucial dimensions of foreign policy: the formal organization of the institutional framework of making the policy, the ideational construction underpinning the design and conduct of the policy, the way in which the national foreign policy is defined, formulated and conducted. Hence, this analytical approach is built on a multi-layered framework incorporating institutions, identities, and interests in the study of the Europeanization of foreign policy.

In order to organize the relationship between the independent variable (Europeanization), mediating factors (governmental politics and the politics of national identity) and dependent variables (institutional adjustment, elite socialization and the change of foreign policy content), the systems approach developed by David Easton is used (see Easton, 1965) and applied to foreign policy analysis by Michael Clarke (1989). The main reason for selecting this approach is that it provides a clear frame of reference for treating Europeanization as the external input of support or constraint feeding into the domestic political system and causing certain types of outputs (the dependant variables). This analytical framework is advantageous insofar as it provides a comprehensive account of the major dimensions of policy and allows room for the generalisation of the empirical findings. The third chapter makes the case for the systems analytical model (pp. 48-51), explains at length why this thesis adopts the view that governmental politics and the politics of identity are justified mediating variables (pp. 53-56), and discusses in detail the three outcomes of the Europeanization process (pp. 56-67).

Several reasons justify the selection of the three countries on which the multiple case-study design is based. The initial pool of potential cases consisted of the ten new member states from CEE, which joined the EU in 2004 and 2007. One criterion for selecting the case studies is related to the integration record. For the aim of this thesis, it is important to include a country with a fast-track record of integration, one with a hesitant start but which was able to catch up and, finally, a laggard that eventually managed to get in. The assumption is that the integration records of different candidate countries, seen against the background of similar conditionality pressures, may explain why certain decisions have been taken, when and with what impact. Allegedly, a slow paced candidate or a laggard would be more willing to compromise to any EU demands as much as required in order to catch up with the group of front-runners or simply to be allowed in, irrespective of the date when the accession occurs. The selection of Hungary, Slovakia and Romania matches this criterion.

Other reasons are related to history and geography. Europeanization, seen as a process of international socialization, challenges national identities and interests. This is also the case with the three countries selected here. They have intertwined histories defined by conflict over people and borders. Also, the policies targeting the Hungarian minorities in Slovakia and Romania played an important role during the accession process as well as after. The fate of kin Hungarians in neighbouring countries features high on the foreign policy agenda of the government in Budapest and is usually a matter of concern for the cabinets in Bratislava and Bucharest. History and identity are key factors in understanding contemporary foreign policy choices and the definition of the national interest. Hence, the three countries provide instructive insights for the aims of this research with regard to the nature of ethnic relations within and between countries, relationships between majority and minority, the nature of statehood, the configuration of political systems, and approaches to

the process of European integration. At first sight, these factors are not immediately linked to foreign policy. Nevertheless, they set out the specificities of the internal milieu and contextualise the process of foreign policy making and the eventual shape of policy. Hence, the selection of countries is expected to yield generalisable observations, which can be extrapolated to the CEE region as a whole.

This thesis has eight chapters. The first chapter, the current one, sets the scene. It introduces the topic of investigation, briefly explains how the subject is approached, why the topic is important and outlines the structure of the study. The second chapter reviews the existing literature in two parts. The first one examines the manner in which various scholars examined national foreign policy using the Europeanization approach and with what results. The second part looks more closely at the literature on foreign policy of Hungary, Slovakia and Romania in the context of European integration. The aim is to underline the gaps in the literature and, against this background, to show how this thesis contributes to the existing literature.

The third chapter unpacks the analytical approach of this thesis. It consists of three main sections. The first one discusses the problematic way in which the Europeanization approach was defined, underlining the conceptual diversity and the apparent confusion caused by the multiplicity of competing definitions, with negative consequences for the epistemic status of the concept. This review of the conceptual definition of Europeanization clears the ground and provides the arguments for the top-down view of the Europeanization approach adopted in this thesis. The option for the top-down version (as opposed to the bottom-up approach) of Europeanization is also defended by discussing the peculiar status of the Europeanization of foreign policy approach, equally targeted from the perspective of foreign policy analysis (as a sub-field of International Relations theory) and European integration theory. It argues that Europeanization makes sense only if it is

understood as the top-down domestic impact of the EU and that the bottom-up projection of national interests at European level resembles too much the liberal intergovernmentalist approach to European integration. Hence, the latter view should be discarded insofar as it contributes to the confusion surrounding the concept of Europeanization.

The second section of the third chapter moves on to outline in detail the theoretical framework based on the foreign policy systems approach. It explains that this thesis is not interested in examining the political systems approach *per se*. It simply uses it as a suitable organizing analytical framework, which gives sense to the relationship between the external input of Europeanization, the two mediating factors of governmental politics and the politics of national identity, and the outputs of the Europeanization process to be explained. The third section then defines and discusses at length the three outputs of the Europeanization process: a) the institutional basis of foreign policy-making and coordination of European affairs at national and European level; b) the extent of socialization of national foreign policy-making elites; and c) the extent of change in the conduct of national foreign policy. The third chapter is then concluded by summarising the main points as a way of facilitating the transition to the chapter on methodology.

The fourth chapter links theory to data collection and analysis. It spells out the research strategy, explaining why a deductive approach is more suitable to the context in which this study is produced and its research aims. Based on that, the multiple case study research design is discussed at length in the subsequent section. The motivation for the selection of the three case studies is again unpacked. The last section presents the methods used for data collection, the design and timetable of research fieldwork in Brussels and the three capitals. All three aspects, namely research strategy, research design and data collection are discussed against the background of the three outcomes of the

Europeanization process and the research questions posed by this study. In the end, the chapter is wrapped up by reiterating the key elements of the methodological approach.

The subsequent three substantive chapters provide the empirical material for answering the research questions. The first empirical chapter (chronologically, the fifth of the thesis) is dedicated to the analysis of the Europeanization of the institutional basis of foreign policy-making between the early 1990 and 2009. It raises two research questions: **a)** what is the nature and extent of institutional change of the national foreign policy systems to the formal and/or informal requirements of participation in EU foreign policy? And **b)** why does the institutional transformation in view of European integration reflect different patterns across the national systems of foreign policy in the three countries? The structure of the fifth chapter largely corresponds to the historical stages of European integration as defined in the methodological chapter, namely the Europe Agreements (EA) stage and integration stage, but has also a functional dimension; it analyses institutional change not only across time and countries, but also by looking at the transformation of the systems of coordination and making of foreign policy at national and European levels. It brings into the analysis not only the change of the role of the ministries of foreign affairs (MFAs) in the system of national coordination of European affairs, but also the role and structure of the Permanent Representations (PermReps) of the three countries in Brussels. The chapter provides empirical evidence that governmental and coalition politics is crucial in understanding why there are differences across countries in the organization of the systems of foreign policy making.

The sixth chapter examines the transformative impact of Europeanization as socialization of identities and interests. As mentioned, the role of history and geography featured high in the list of motives for selecting the three countries as case studies of this research. Therefore, the first section of the sixth chapter explains how the perception of

history and historical experiences played a significant role in defining contemporary foreign policy choices. The second section overviews the way in which European identity features in the national political discourse. Both these sections have the role of setting the stage for examining the issue of elite socialization. The two research questions this chapter attempts to answer are as follows: **a)** do the experts and diplomats from the Permanent Representations hold different views on the aims and means of EU foreign policy from those in the capitals, working in the ministries of foreign affairs? And **b)** is elite socialization simply a process of learning new norms and rules or does it have a deeper character that affects the inner self-identification of the participant agents? This section aims to investigate whether the national representatives in Brussels have been socialized into the norms and rules of EU culture of compromise more than their colleagues in the national capitals and are therefore able to perform the role of norms entrepreneurs, able to change the traditional perception of prevailing norms and rules. The chapter draws heavily on the empirical material collected through interviews conducted in Brussels, Budapest, Bratislava and Bucharest with senior officials. The chapter concludes pessimistically with regard to the initial assumptions and suggests that the learning of new norms and rules does not lead to a deeper socialization of foreign policy officials and that the perception of national interests and power is closely linked to the instrumental view of European interests in the field of foreign policy.

The seventh and last empirical chapter moves the focus towards the formal conduct of foreign policy, both in terms of general trends, priorities and instruments, and with regard to concrete foreign policy decisions. It sets out to answer two research questions. The first one asks whether the officially stated foreign policy priorities and commitments, interests and the means to achieve them turned to reflect a more salient European dimension after accession. The second one looks at the extent to which the conduct of

foreign policy reflected a preference for EU channels rather than using other national/international tools. These two issues are examined in the four major sections of the chapter. The first one reviews the early foreign policy choices and the issue of continuity and change of national foreign policies before and after accession. The second section looks at the top-down relationship between the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and the national foreign policies. The third section explores the extent to which the perception of national interest became more salient after accession. The fourth section moves the discussion a step forward by focusing on three key contemporary critical events challenging the national foreign policies of the CEE countries and of the EU as a whole: the US-led war in Iraq in 2003, the NATO airstrikes against Yugoslavia in 1999 and the Kosovo declaration of independence in 2008. The selection of these three events was justified by different reasons. The war in Iraq was selected as a case study because it clearly highlighted the fact that the pro-US standpoints of the candidate countries from CEE did not represent a cleavage between the old and new member states; indeed, it illustrated the diversity of preferences separating the old member states in two competing camps (a third set of preferences was that of the neutral member states). The examination of two events related with Kosovo (the NATO airstrikes in 1999 against Yugoslavia and the unilateral declaration of independence of Kosovo in 2008) is justified by the fact that the domestic pressure on the policy makers in the three countries was far greater, given the geographical proximity, historical and cultural links, and political sensitiveness. Besides, the two events occurred both before and after accession, which offer the chance of analysing whether and to what extent the membership status changed the national foreign policy decisions on the two moments.

The final chapter concludes the thesis by summarising the findings against the research questions and assumptions and critically considers the limitations of this research.

It also underlines the contribution of this study to the literature on the Europeanization of foreign policy and foreign policy analysis. At the same time, it contemplates future avenues of research.

CHAPTER 2

EUROPEANIZATION OF FOREIGN POLICY: A LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The chapter has two main sections. The first section reviews the ever-burgeoning literature on the Europeanization of foreign policy. Given the substantive body of academic literature accumulated over the years, the review leaves aside an important part of the literature dealing with the EU as a foreign policy actor, as well as the foreign policy of EU member states when studied isolated from the EU context. The scope of the review is, in general, limited to those books, articles and conference proceedings or the like, examining the influence of and the interaction between the EU and the member states in the field of foreign policy or policy coordination of European affairs.

This approach is justified by the fact that European integration challenged the traditional conception of external relations and foreign policy and blurred the distinction between the domestic and foreign realms of governmental activity. The coordination of European integration and European affairs is a good example of both the peculiar nature of the EU and the inadequacy of treating the EU as simply one of the external actors influencing domestic politics. As László Kiss aptly remarked (Kiss, 2004: 34),

‘the interconnection between “international” and “domestic” policy in Union policy generate “intermestic”-policy which creates “foreign policy” resembling domestic policy’ (for a similar idea, see Blair, 2004: 199).

Far from being merely a matter of foreign policy, European integration became an intrinsic part of domestic politics and policy-making, although reflecting internal peculiarities rather than reproducing a pre-existing model (see chapter five of this thesis).

The second section examines the literature dealing with the influence of European integration on the systems of foreign policy-making and coordination of European affairs

in Hungary, Slovakia and Romania, the three case studies of this thesis. The review does not cover those studies examining the national foreign policies with reference to other regional or international organizations, such as the Visegrad Group, the Organization of Black Sea Economic Cooperation (OBSEC), North Atlantic Alliance (NATO), the United Nations (UN), Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and so on. At the same time, it does not examine the issue of bilateral relations. This is simply because this body of academic literature falls outside the remit of this thesis, which is mainly interested in the influence of Europeanization on the foreign policy of the new member states. At the same time, the review does not aim to offer a comprehensive discussion of the cited material, but to highlight some of the major approaches employed on this matter as well as the gaps in the literature, which this thesis intends to address.

2.2. Literature on the Europeanization of foreign policy

The field of foreign policy was not targeted by the Europeanization research agenda from the very beginning of the integration process. However, the gradual development of cooperation in foreign policy matters at European level and the setting up of formal institutional mechanisms, such as the European Political Cooperation (EPC), in the 1970s-1980s, and especially the CFSP in the 1990s, opened the way for examining how national foreign policies were affected by the institutionalization of European foreign policy. Hence, the increased interest in applying the Europeanization approach to foreign policy reflects the developments of this policy itself. The limited progresses of the EPC in the 1970s attracted only limited academic interest in the early stages. Only a few studies can be traced back to that period. Two early works studied the EPC (Allen et al., 1982) and the interplay between national foreign policies and the EPC (Hill, 1983). However, these attempts were not strictly focused on how the EPC or the EC by and large impacts on the

national foreign policies. As the next chapter elaborates in more detail, the main concern of these studies was in explaining the EC governments drive to cooperate within the EC framework and the emergence and nature of the new foreign policy cooperation at the supranational level. During the 1980s, several other studies also analysed the development of cooperation in the foreign policy field at the European level without paying too much attention to the constraints and opportunities for domestic policy-making caused by the participation in the EPC (see for instance Ginsberg, 1989, Ifestos, 1987, Pijpers et al., 1988).

A collection of studies, edited by Christopher Hill in 1983, looked at the relationship between national and European levels, although focused especially on the manner in which divergent national foreign policies may fit into the common framework of the EPC (Hill, 1983). Keatinge (1983a: 138) was among the first to use the term ‘Europeanization of foreign policy’ with regard to the reorientation of Irish foreign policy due to accession to the EC (see also in Featherstone, 2003: 10). A few years later, de la Serre (1988) examined the scope of national adaptation to the EPC of the then twelve member states of the EC.

The fact that the 1970s and 1980s were not prolific years from the point of view of the academic production on the subject of Europeanization of national foreign policies is the consequence of the nature of EPC itself. Established as an elusive, mostly informal and highly confidential framework of consultation (Keatinge, 1983b: 338), the intergovernmental design of the EPC did not prove a productive ground for researching the Europeanization of foreign policy of the EU member states. However, the setting up of the CFSP after 1993 changed the situation in the years to come. During the 1990s, a number of studies started researching the foreign policy behaviour of the EC/EU member states during the two decades of the EPC and the early years of CFSP.

As mentioned from the outset, the body of literature focused on European foreign policy or the EU as a foreign policy actor is not the main focus of this review. Therefore, important studies concerning the EU's role in the world (Bretherton and Vogler, 2006, Dannreuther, 2004, Marsh and Mackenstein, 2005), the development of European cooperation in foreign policy (Duke, 2000, Smith, 1999, Smith, 2004), or theoretical investigation into the peculiar nature of the EU foreign policy (Carlsnaes et al., 2004, Carlsnaes and Smith, 1994, Tonra and Christiansen, 2004) do not constitute the object of this review. Instead, the focus here is upon the literature on the interaction between the EU and the member states in the field of foreign policy. The use of the term 'interaction' is justified because this corpus of literature covers not only the domestic impact of the EU, but also the national input into European policy-making. It is not only about what the literature coined as the 'top-down' approach, but also the 'bottom-up' style of interaction. In other words, the member states attempt to project their own interests at supranational level.

For a start, a number of books were produced during the last two decades dealing with the individual foreign policies of the EU member states in the context of the emerging CFSP. 'The Actors in Europe's Foreign Policy', Hill's edited book published in 1996, represents such an attempt to analyse the interaction between national and European foreign policies (see Hill, 1996a). This publication is in fact an updated and extended version of the abovementioned 'National foreign policy and European Political Cooperation', published in 1983. 'The Actors...' is structured in a representative manner for an entire body of edited works, published both before and after the setting up of the CFSP. A similar type of work is the edited 'The foreign policies of European Union member states' of Ian Manners and Richard G. Whitman (2000). The editors put forward a comparative analytical framework for the study of the foreign policies of EU member

states in the specific context of EU membership. The analytical framework proposed the study of: a) foreign policy change through adaptation and socialization; b) foreign policy process by examining the domestic and bureaucratic dynamics; and c) foreign policy action within or outside the European context. The edited volume provided instructive insights into the national foreign policies of the fifteen member states.

The normal outline of this type of edited book starts with an introductory chapter laying down the theoretical argument, usually discussing the peculiar nature of European foreign policy and the conceptual difficulties it creates in understanding the conduct of national foreign policies of the member states. The main body consists of ten or fifteen individual case studies, which are approached along the theoretical lines set up in the introductory section. Finally, the concluding part sums up the findings, points out the shortcomings of the theory and indicates possible and/or desirable directions for future research. This approach is particularly useful insofar as it broadens the universe of case studies, accumulates further empirical evidence and eventually expands and deepens this novel research agenda itself.

To date, all old member states have been studied from the perspective of the impact of Europeanization on their national foreign policies. Amongst others, Rieker (2005, 2006) and Wong (2006) examined the Europeanization of France's foreign policy, Gross (2007) and Miskimmon (2007) looked at Germany, and Forster and Blair (2002), Allen and Oliver (2006) or Dover (2007) studied the UK. The Europeanization of Belgium's foreign policy was studied, among others, by Coolsaet and Soetendorp (2000) and Coolsaet (2004), and that of the Netherlands by Verbeek & van der Vleuten (2008) and Tonra (2001). Likewise, several other authors analysed the interaction between the EU and the foreign policy of the member states on the southern flank, such as Spain (Barbé, 2000, Torreblanca, 2001), Italy (Missiroli, 2000), Portugal (Koukis, 2001), Greece (Agnantopoulos, 2008, Economides,

2005, Tsardanidis and Stavridis, 2005) and Cyprus (Sepos, 2008: 120-38). The Nordic enlargement provided also the opportunity for extending the research into the way in which Europeanization affects the status of neutrality of Sweden, Finland (Miles, 2000) and Austria (Falkner, 2001, Phinnemore, 2000), following the similar research previously conducted on Ireland (Keatinge, 1984, Tonra, 1999).

Most of the foregoing studies, published as books, chapters in books, journal articles, working papers or doctoral theses are focused on single case studies. However, several important contributions were produced as comparative case studies, most notably the widely cited study of Ben Tonra on the Europeanization of Dutch, Danish and Irish foreign policies (Tonra, 2001). Lisbeth Aggestam employed a political-cultural approach in examining the Europeanization of foreign policy of Britain, France, and Germany (Aggestam, 2004a, 2004b). More recently, Eva Gross selected the same trio of member states as multiple case-studies for exploring the Europeanization of policy-making in the context of the emerging European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) (Gross, 2009).

Other studies depart from the case-study method by taking a regional approach in examining the impact of European integration on the foreign policy of Central and East European countries as a group, not individual countries (see for instance Edwards, 2006). Widening the theoretical approach, other analyses look at the national administrative structures. As Börzel and Risse remarked, Europeanization influences not only the policy process, but also the broad constitutional framework and the institutional design of the polity; in other words Europeanization might affect the polity, policy and politics of a given member state (2003: 59-60). Thus, the widening of perspective is important insofar as foreign policy-making is only a part of the broader process of transformation of the national administrations, systems of policy-making and inter-institutional coordination. For instance, some authors examined the Europeanization of national administrations and

executives in Western Europe (Goetz, 2000, Kassim et al., 2000, Knill, 2001, Mény et al., 1996). Others explored the institutional transformation of Central and East European countries (see for instance, Ágh, 1999, Dimitrova and Toshkov, 2007, Lippert et al., 2001) (see next section for details).

According to the focus of the main independent variables, these studies can be also classified as primarily of a top-down type, searching for empirical evidence of the domestic impact of the EU, or bottom-up, examining the projection of national preferences at EU level. In the latter category is for instance, the study of Economides (2005) on Greek foreign policy as the advancement of national interests at European level. Also, analysing the reactions of EU member states to the Falklands conflict in 1982, Stavridis and Hill examine especially the domestic sources of the national foreign policies within the EPC framework (Stavridis and Hill, 1996). However, as previously mentioned and further explained in the next chapter, this thesis does not subscribe to the bottom-up version of Europeanization.

2.3. The literature on the domestic impact of European integration in Hungary, Slovakia and Romania

The literature on the Europeanization of foreign policy briefly discussed in the previous section represents a more or less coherent research agenda. By contrast, when it comes to the three case studies of this thesis, the literature is more eclectic and less consistent insofar as the study of the impact of European integration was not always the main topic. In other words, in many cases the focus was placed on domestic politics, while the impact of the EU or other external constraints were employed only as peripheral explanatory variables. This fact was an important factor in the decision to select Hungary,

Slovakia and Romania as the sources for empirical evidence with regard to the Europeanization of foreign policy in CEE.

The Europeanization research was primarily concerned with the domestic impact of the EU on the old member states; the inclusion of the candidate countries and new member states emerged as a distinct research agenda only recently (Sedelmeier, 2006). The works on the domestic impact of the EU on the candidate and new member states subsumed two distinct bodies of academic literature. One targets the aspirant, candidate or acceding countries; the other looks at the new member states. The former is a vast body of literature, spanning more than a decade, and including research on transition and democratisation, enlargement and conditionality, and to some extent Europeanization (see also Schimmelfennig, 2002); it also includes the studies on the politics of ethnic and minority rights or national identity politics. The latter mainly refers to the burgeoning literature on the post-accession domestic impact of the EU, including several studies on the transformation of foreign policy. The body of literature dealing with national identity issues still represents a thriving research agenda, numerous articles being published mainly in journals such as *East European Politics and Society*, *Nations and Nationalisms*, *Europe-Asia Studies*, *Slavic Review*, *Osteuropa* or *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*.

Without pretending to offer a comprehensive list of titles, I mention the research conducted on the Europeanization of foreign policy of Poland (Kaminska, 2007, Pomorska, 2007) and the Czech Republic (Rihácková, 2005). Other contributions include the study on the Europeanization of Foreign Service in the Czech Republic (Drulák et al., 2003, Drulák and Königová, 2007) or Estonia (Viks, 2002) or the inputs from the foreign policies of the Central and Eastern European countries into the EU foreign policy-making (Edwards, 2006). In the last example listed, Edwards switches from the top-down to the bottom-up logic, exploring the role played by the new member states in the recent

developments of the CFSP. He argues that despite a certain incoherence and even mistrust, the CEE countries are prepared to play an active role in the future of the EU foreign policy. Furthermore, he concludes that the process of socialization of foreign policy-makers was swift and it changed the balance from traditional foreign policy thinking, based on the valorisation of geography and history.

A bottom-up comparative explanatory account of national preference formation in the new member states and how these preferences impacted on the EU was developed by Nathaniel Copsey and Tim Haughton (2009). The argument is that various domestic vulnerabilities and perceived shortcomings play a key role in explaining national stances on various policy areas and with regard to the overall question of ‘what is Europe for?’ (Copsey and Haughton, 2009: 265-6; 284). Yet, too little is known about the preferences of the new member states. Given the fact that the next decade will witness an increase in the importance of these preferences in understanding the EU policies and politics, the two authors also insist that more studies need to be elaborated on this matter (Copsey and Haughton, 2009: 284). This thesis aims to provide a sound contribution in this direction, although applying a different analytical framework.

As briefly pointed out above, a number of studies on the CEE countries were concerned with the extent to which the Europeanization of national polity affected national political institutions and the organization of public administration. In other words, one should include the broad institutional and administrative context, which creates the framework within which foreign policy is formulated.

An example is the study on the coordination of European policies in the new member states, conducted by Dimitrova and Toshkov (2007). The historical institutionalist analysis adopted by the two authors covers the ten new member states from CEE, including Hungary, Slovakia and Romania. According to them, the institutional transformation

associated with the need to implement new systems of coordinating European affairs is best accounted for by the 'politics of institutional choice' involving major domestic political and political-administrative actors such as the prime minister, the foreign affairs ministry, the cabinet as a whole, the presidency, the political parties represented in government (Dimitrova and Toshkov, 2007: 963-64). Danica Fink-Hafner (2007) examined the changing design of the management of European affairs in Hungary, Estonia, and Slovenia by contrasting the external pressures of Europeanization with national administrative traditions and the patterns of party competitions. A different study, focused on five CEE states, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Poland and Slovenia, founded that the EU pressures candidate countries to reform the national administration in anticipation of membership and that the anticipated EU membership is a driving force for reform of the core executives (Lippert, et al., 2001: 980).

With regard to the case studies of this thesis, the majority of existing contributions touch upon related aspects which might affect the formulation or conduct of foreign policy, without paying attention to this problem in particular. There is no shortage of studies which see foreign policy as 'grand policy' rather than as public policy (see for instance Călin, 2002, Gálik, 2003, Muresan et al., 2004, Póti, 2006, Terényi, 2009, Varga, 2000). These studies are more concerned with the external dimension of the policy in terms of interaction with external actors, either states or regional and international organizations. In all three countries, the transatlantic relationship and NATO occupies a privileged position, alongside regional cooperation (see for instance Gazdag, 2004). Given the fact that these studies are in general the product of local think tanks and research centres, they tend to be prescriptive in character and problem-solving orientated (see Duleba, 2004, Magyarics, 2004, Bilčík, 2007).

Amongst the existing studies, the most frequent are those dealing with foreign policy-making in Slovakia. Perhaps this is due to the fact that, being a newborn state, the Slovak Republic faced the challenge of setting up from scratch a new institutional design. For instance, the Slovak Foreign Policy Association (SFPA, or *Slovenská spoločnosť pre zahraničnú politiku* in Slovak), a national think-tank, arose from the need to create a forum for debate on how foreign policy-making should be organized and how the foreign policy should be conducted (Duleba et al., 1998).

A detailed account of the organization of the system of foreign policy in the Slovak Republic, in comparison with that of the Czech case, is provided by Zurovchak (1995). Zurovchak used a cognitive theoretical approach in order to assess the role that cultural factors play in the organization and structuration of Slovak foreign policy. While it provides important empirical information, his deductive, theory-testing approach has a different aim and scope than the aim of this thesis, namely to explore the impact of international organization on domestic foreign policy making in Slovakia. Looking at the specific period of the Mečiar leadership and the way in which external factors provided the government with constraints and opportunities, Tim Haughton argued that the contribution of the Foreign Service to the policy-making process was limited and the conduct of foreign affairs hardly dynamic. This was, his argument goes on, due to the limited diplomatic experience prior to independence in 1993, as well as to frequent changes at the top of the ministry during 1993-7 (Haughton, 2005).

Instead, examining the impact of Europeanization on Slovak diplomacy, Jozef Bátora concludes that the Slovak Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as a new institution missing a traditional diplomatic culture,

‘is prone to be penetrated by norms and values entailed in the evolving system of European interstate relations, which has effects upon the role-perceptions and identity of the MFA’ (Bátora, 2003a: 116).

His study was conducted even before Slovakia became a member of the European Union, supporting therefore the argument that for the CEE countries, the impact of EU policies and institutions was similar to the effects of the EU on the existing member states, but broader and deeper in scope (Grabbe, 2003: 303). The adaptation is more sudden for the new member states than for old members (Manners and Whitman, 2000: 7, also Pridham, 2000: 51-52); the newcomers have to rapidly reorient their relations with third states or international organizations in order to comply with the EU requirements in the field of external relations and foreign and security policy.

Also, employing a bottom-up approach, Vladimír Bilčík examined Slovakia's inputs into the shape and functioning of the EU's external relations (Bilčík, 2004). Several similar studies were conducted in Hungary, examining the process of policy-making and coordination of European affairs in the context of European integration. The Europeanization of policy-making was seen as evolving from an 'anticipatory' to an 'adaptive' Europeanization guided by the concrete demands of the EU and the accession process (Ágh and Rózsás, 2003: 28). The success and limitation of Europeanization of policy-making in Hungary was linked to the fact that

'the removal of both institutional and cultural deficits is the most important policy priority for Hungary in the next few years' (Ágh, 1999: 852).

A related study examining the management and coordination of European affairs in Hungary was published in October 2002, one year and a half before formal membership (Vida, 2002). Krisztina Vida concluded that Hungary *'is on the right track towards gradual adaptation to EU requirements'* and it should not face any special institutional or administrative difficulties during the post-accession stage; accordingly, Hungary was assumed to have good chances of turning into an 'ordinary' member state in the enlarged EU (Vida, 2002: 72).

References to the organization of the decision-making process of Romanian foreign policy or the coordination of European affairs are scarce and lack substance (see for instance Muresan et al., 2004). Instead, more attention was paid to the intricate post-communist transition and democratisation associated with a more difficult and hesitant process of European integration (Ciobanu, 2007, Gallagher, 2009, Mungiu-Pippidi, 2006, Pop, 2006, Pridham, 2007, Stan, 2002). The Europeanization of Romania's polity was mainly seen from the perspective of pre-accession conditionality, equated in this context with democratisation. In general, the fact that Romania was considered a 'problematic case' is fully proved by the pattern of its integration, dissimilar to the path followed by other candidate countries, although similar with that of Bulgaria.

There is a consistent body of academic literature approaching inter-related matters of ethnicity, national identity, nationalism and the shaping influence of the ethno-national politics or the politics of national identity on the overall policy of European integration (see for instance László J. Kulcsár and Brădăţan, 2007, Butler, 2007). With regard to the EU, this body of literature touches upon the matter of conditionality and the EU norms of minority and human rights issues as well as the way in which the national governments of Hungary, Slovakia, and Romania were compelled by the EU to conclude bilateral treaties including provisions on the treatment of national minorities (among others, see for instance Batt, 1996, Harris, 2004, Haughton, 2005, Nelson, 1998: 318-21, Pridham, 2002, Ram, 2003).

2.4. Conclusions

A recent assessment of the state of the art in the field of Europeanization research provides a rather gloomy and sceptical view as regards the theoretical achievements (Lehmkuhl, 2007: 350-2). At the same time, the extensive number of empirical studies

conducted as part of the Europeanization research agenda proves that this concept is attractive. New articles and books continuous to be published at the very time of writing up this thesis, enriching the existing literature. The very debate and critique surrounding its theoretical strength provides in fact evidence for the fertility of this research agenda. This is a confirmation of the optimistic observation made by Ben Tonra almost a decade ago according to which it

‘is a pleasure to report on the health and strength of publications in the field... The developing scholarship in this area is throwing up new conceptual challenges and offering a widening variety of conclusions to some well-established questions’ (Tonra, 2001: 168).

Tacking stock of these valuable studies, it is clear that some areas are under-researched and merit attention. As the following chapters will show, the research material collected and discussed in this thesis addresses some serious gaps in the existing scholarship. For instance, with regard to the literature on the socialization of national officials into the norms and rules of EU culture of compromise and consensus seeking, there is almost nothing about the diplomats and senior policy-makers from the three countries examined here. This thesis provides empirical material and analysis to fill in this gap. Another under-researched topic is the comparison of the different domestic circumstances in the three countries in which the decisions with regard to the recognition of Kosovo independence were made. While some studies have been produced with regard to the institutional adaptation in Hungary and Slovakia, there was less interest in the case of Romania. This thesis also addresses this gap.

Going beyond punctual contributions to the gaps in the literature, perhaps the most significant input of this thesis comes from its multiple-case studies design, which offers a multi-layered comparative framework for explaining the different impact of Europeanization on the policy-making and foreign policy of the Hungary, Slovakia, and

Romania. This framework is expected to contribute to the existing body of literature and to further the understanding of the impact of European integration on Central and Eastern Europe. There is an obvious need to enlarge the Europeanization research agenda by adding new in-depth case studies from CEE. A complete picture of what is the impact of European integration at domestic level cannot be achieved unless all new EU member states are surveyed on this matter. In turn, this would provide the empirical basis for comparative analysis across the EU and assessment of the direction, nature, and speed of Europeanization.

CHAPTER 3

INSTITUTIONS, IDENTITIES AND INTERESTS: A SYSTEMIC FRAMEWORK FOR STUDYING THE EUROPEANIZATION OF FOREIGN POLICY

3.1. Introduction

As illustrated in the review chapter, the literature addressing the Europeanization of foreign policy is mainly focused on studying the nature, extent, and direction of domestic change caused by Europeanization. Even if other aspects are touched upon in the literature, such as the theoretical and conceptual substance of Europeanization, the bulk of the literature consists of descriptive accounts of how the domestic impact of Europe, in general, or the European Union, in particular, is reflected in the shape and content of national foreign policies. These aspects are also addressed by this thesis with regard to the three case studies selected. However, the question of why Europeanization has uneven influence across countries is far less researched. On the other hand, various studies on the methodological side of the Europeanization research agenda point to the need for alternative explanations: domestic politics or globalization are the options mentioned most often (Haverland, 2007: 59).

Europeanization as an input of the international environment does not cause the transformation of foreign policy directly. The influence of the EU is mediated by domestic factors. The process of European integration is the catalyst for change, but the transformation reflects largely the interplay of internal factors. These play the role of mediating factors, which might or might not facilitate domestic change. Two domestic mediating factors are considered here, namely governmental politics and the politics of national identity. The extent to which Europeanization transformed the foreign policy in the three EU new member states is examined along three dimensions, namely institutions,

identity, and interests underpinning the making and conduct of national foreign policies (the mediating and dependent variables are unpacked and discussed in greater detail later in this chapter).

The theoretical framework of this thesis builds not only on the Europeanization approach, but also on the systems approach to foreign policy analysis as laid out by Clarke and White (1989), but not limited to them (see for instance Brecher, 1972, Kaplan, 1957, Rosenau, 1980). As White agrees, the systems approach

‘cannot of itself explain foreign policy but it does help the analyst to construct explanations by setting out the range of variables involved and the possible interrelationship between them’ (White, 1989: 18).

The advantage of this model is that it provides the researcher with a simple and intuitive organizing device, broad and flexible enough to include the most important processes and interactions responsible for the articulation of foreign policy (White, 1989: 18). It also provides the advantage of distinguishing analytically between influences from external context and domestic environment (Holsti, 1995: 252), notwithstanding the difficulty of separating the two in the complex contemporary world. In this way, the Europeanization approach is integrated within a systemic analysis of foreign policy.

If foreign policy is understood as a system fed by inputs from the external and internal environment, then the EU may be conceptualized as a sub-section of the external environment. Likewise, other external influences on foreign policy exist as well; Holsti (1995: 252-5) identifies inputs such as the structure of the international system, the nature of the world economy, purposes of other actors, global and regional problems, international law and world opinion. The internal environment or the intra-societal environment, as defined by the creator of the political systems approach, David Easton, may be characterized by a wide variety of sub-systems, not only social, but also cultural, economic, or demographic, each of them with their own sub-sections (Easton, 1965: 23).

An even wider approach, though not expressing a strict systemic point of view, is that foreign policy change

‘is the result of a complex interplay of stimuli from the external environment and domestic-level cognitive, institutional, and political variables’ (Checkel, 1993: 297).

This chapter consists of three sections. The first one discusses the peculiar status of the Europeanization approach when applied to the study of foreign policy. Both foreign policy analysis and European integration theory approach the study of foreign policy of European states. The first section also discusses the way in which the Europeanization approach was defined and conceptualized and clears the ground for the theoretical argument, developed in the following section.

The second part spells out in more detail the theoretical framework employed by this thesis based on the foreign policy systems approach. It explains at length the reasons why governmental politics and national identity politics are used in this thesis as mediating factors between the input of Europeanization and the three outputs to be explained.

The third part defines and discusses the three outputs of the Europeanization process: a) the institutional basis of foreign policy-making and coordination of European affairs at national and European level; b) the extent of socialization of national foreign policy-making elites; and c) the extent of change of the conduct of national foreign policy. A summary then reviews the main points made in this chapter in order to facilitate the transition towards the chapter on methodology.

3.2. Europeanization of foreign policy between foreign policy analysis and theories of European integration

In a recent review, Wong identifies five key research questions emerging from the literature dealing with the Europeanization of foreign policy (see Wong, 2007: 322-9).

These five research questions are as follows: a) how can the process be conceptualized?; b) what is changing and what are the mechanisms and directions of change?; c) what is the scope of its effects?; d) is it producing convergence? and e) what is the significance of informal socialization as a vector of change? In fact, the first question reflects the conceptual and methodological challenge of Europeanization research. The later four questions revolve around whether Europeanization stands for the domestic impact of the EU or the projection of national interest at the European level. Other questions arising from the literature are subsumed in the debate over the manner in which Europeanization is conceptualized. For instance, the question of convergence is a possible by-product of Europeanization, seen as a top-down process. In this sense, the domestic change caused by the EU would lead to the gradual rapprochement of national policies.

The most controversial issue that springs from these questions is that of multiple conceptualizations of Europeanization. The literature review provided for further illustrations that the concept of Europeanization is employed in different contexts with different meanings. The current use of the Europeanization approach contributes to the conceptual confusion over who is doing what and how, which creates the risk of overstressing the concept (Radaelli, 2000: 3-4). Therefore, the following paragraphs examine the conceptual confusion created by the fact that Europeanization is used indiscriminately. It aims to demonstrate that the conceptualization of Europeanization of foreign policy as a bottom-up process is misleading. In consequence, it makes the case for the use of the top-down approaches.

The problem of causal direction in which Europeanization acts is a source of confusion as regard the very nature of Europeanization. Take for instance Europeanization as the projection of national interest at the European level in contrast with Europeanization as the domestic impact of the EU. In the former case, the independent variable is a

domestic factor influencing the dependent variable, located at European level. In the later case, the causal arrow is reversed from the EU towards the domestic level. The first is the so-called bottom-up approach; the second is the top-down one.

Besides, scholars dealing with the Europeanization of foreign policy also used the concept in relation to a third sense, that of identity reconstruction through a process of socialization of identities and interests (Wong, 2005). The argument is that the socialization approach is neither bottom-up, nor top-down, but it cuts across levels; the outcome of this process is the emergence of a common European interest and identity alongside national interest and identity (see Wong, 2005: 141). However, this thesis maintains that the socialization approach may be subsumed to the top-down influence of the EU, conceptualized in a broader sense. The process of elite socialization takes place within the institutional architecture of the EU and it does reflect, to a certain extent, a diffuse transfer of norms and ideas from the EU towards national representatives.

i) Europeanization of Foreign Policy and International Relations

To each of the three foregoing directions or dimensions of Europeanization correspond distinct approaches to foreign policy analysis. However, the origins of these approaches are to be found in the field of international relations theory; foreign policy analysis is a sub-field of international relations. It should be remarked that the study of foreign policy is a contested subject-matter on its own, hanging uneasily between the study of international relations and public policy (Carlsnaes, 2002). Kenneth Waltz for instance dismisses the relevance of foreign policy analysis as a distinct field of study exactly because it is driven by both internal and external factors (Waltz, 1996). Similarly, Alexander Wendt argued that his social theory of international politics is not interested in foreign policy; in other words, the unit-level of analysis of a state's foreign policy is not

relevant for the study of the international system, situated at a different level of analysis (see Wendt, 1999: 11).

However, several clear approaches to foreign policy analysis have been developed during the last half-century. According to the type of explanatory factors, these approaches may belong either to the internal or external environment of the state. The domestic-foreign frontier is also a criterion of demarcation of foreign policy for either the study of international relations or domestic politics. Even if the clear-cut separation of these two domains as determinants of a state's external behaviour is no longer the orthodoxy, many authors uphold the view that the external-internal distinction has practical analytical advantages (see Hill, 2003, Holsti, 1995, Rosenau, 1997).

Some scholars have labelled the explanatory approaches derived from domestic politics as *Innenpolitik*. The term comes from the German *Innen*, meaning inside, and *Politik*, standing for politics. *Innenpolitik* stresses the importance of domestic factors as determinants of foreign policy (Carlsnaes, 2002: 334, Rose, 1998: 148-51). However, this label is sufficiently broad to include diverse and disparate approaches looking at cognitive and psychological factors, bureaucratic politics, governmental politics, group dynamic, leadership, policy implementation, mass-media and others (see for instance Carlsnaes, 2002: 334, Hudson and Vore, 1995). The second important tradition in foreign policy analysis is heavily inspired by the realist thinking in international relations; it was termed *Realpolitik* (see in Carlsnaes, 2002: 334). *Realpolitik*, concerned with the influence of the international system on state behaviour, includes different versions of realist thinking, to mention only the 'offensive' and 'defensive' types (for a review, see Rose, 1998: 149-50).

However, this label is misleading insofar as the influence of the international system is examined not only by the realist tradition, but also by neoliberal theory and the theories of international regimes, institutions, and organizations. For those theories, the

international system continues to be anarchic, but states do not pursue exclusively zero-sum games, as realists assume; they tend to cooperate in order to reduce transaction costs, through building of norms, regimes and institutions. Cooperation in international fora creates constraints, as well as opportunities, for participant member states, which affect their international behaviour. As Gourevitch remarks, the international environment reflects both the distribution of power amongst states (realist view) and the distribution of economic activity and wealth (neoliberal approach); in other words, the domestic political developments are shaped by war and trade (Gourevitch, 1978: 882-3).

The *Realpolitik* tradition reflects mainly a top-down view, in which foreign policy is the result of developments at the level of the international system, either malign (realist view) or benign (neoliberal view). *Innenpolitik*'s proponents uphold the reverse bottom-up approach in line with which foreign policy mirrors the influence of inputs from within the state.

The third dimension discussed here, namely the reconstruction of identity and interests, has its correspondent in the social constructivist approach to foreign policy. Crossing the internal – external divide, the social constructivist perspective of foreign policy emphasizes the constitutive role played by norms and ideas in defining identities and prescribing correct behaviour (Carlsnaes, 2002: 340). Notwithstanding the differences within various branches of social constructivist thinking, it should be noted that the social constructivist perspective differs from both the *Innenpolitik* and *Realpolitik* because of its epistemological status. While the first two approaches are derived from an objectivist or rationalist epistemology, social constructivism is inspired by an interpretivist epistemology. The result is that Europeanization was approached from contrasting epistemological standpoints. The objectivist or realist epistemology examines the

Europeanization by using the methods of natural sciences. In contrast, the interpretivist epistemology employs a research strategy

‘that respects the differences between people and the objects of the natural sciences and therefore requires the social scientist to grasp the subjective meaning of social action’ (Bryman, 2001: 12-3).

Following from the above, the ambiguity of Europeanization when applied to foreign policy results from three factors: a) multiplicity of sources; b) contrasting meanings associated with the concept itself; and c) different methodologies.

ii) Europeanization of foreign policy and the study of European integration

The abovementioned traditions from the field of International Relations theory, including foreign policy analysis, have also been a source of inspiration for the students of European integration. All three orientations found their way into the study of European integration. The concept of Europeanization, as illustrated in the literature review section, became common currency only lately; however, its entrance into the parlance of European theory can be best understood in the context of stages of European integration (see Caporaso, 2007: 24).

In the initial stages of European integration, the explanatory accounts of this process were mainly of a bottom-up type. Starting in the 1950s, these approaches were concerned with explaining the flows from society and state towards regional integration. The main question in this period was what reasons European states have had for agreeing to relinquish parts of state sovereignty in favour of supranational integration. During this period, the theoretical approaches to European integration were heavily influenced by the mainstream thinking in international relations. As Caporaso argues (2007: 24), both proponents of functionalism and intergovernmentalism (or realism) were operating within the theoretical paradigm of international relations. They were interested in describing and

explaining the move from a decentralized system of balance of power of the Westphalian type towards a proto-European polity.

The advancement of European integration during the 1980s shifted the theoretical focus away from bottom-up perspectives towards explaining the process of integration itself. During this stage, the process of European integration was given a new impetus as a result of the developments leading to the adoption of the Single European Act (SEA) and the completion of the internal market programme. Likewise, the adoption of the Treaty of the European Union and the move towards building the political union further stressed the need to examine and explain supranational integration. The attention was no longer directed towards the question of why the state delegates parts of national sovereignty to regional integration, but how the regional organization functions, who are the main actors, and how they interact.

Finally, during the last two decades, the focus of enquiry turned out to be on the domestic impact of the EU, the change that the EU caused to the very states that initiated the process of regional integration decades ago. The enhanced pace and deepening of economic integration following the internal market programme, set up under the SEA in 1987, led to increased attention to the processes through which EU impacts on the member states. The European Union was already a mature reality, changing significantly the context in which member states operate. Therefore, what the concept of Europeanization brought about was a change in the analytical focus from member states, seen as sources of power-delegation to the EU, to a reverse, top-down relationship (see Börzel and Risse, 2003: 57-8, Caporaso, 2007: 23-7, Smith, 2000: 613, Vink and Graziano, 2007: 3-7).

A survey of 116 academic articles published between the 1980s and 2000 shows a spectacular increase in the use of the 'Europeanization' approach during the 1990s in contrast to the scarce use of the term throughout the 1980s (Featherstone, 2003: 4-6). This

trend is confirmed by updated data from the last eight years (up to the time of writing up this thesis). Between 2002 and 2009 (inclusive), the number of academic articles having the term Europeanization (also spelt as Europeanisation) as keyword has increased from 116 to 446 articles and proceedings papers, an average of over 55 items published every year, compared with only nine per year for the decade preceding 2001 (see Table 1 below).²

Table 1. The use of the term Europeanization in the academic literature for the period 2003-2009

Publication Year	Record Count	% of 394
2009	78	20.76%
2008	82	19.75%
2005	58	14.68%
2007	54	13.67%
2006	52	13.16%
2004	50	12.66%
2003	20	5.06%
Total	394	99.75%

Although these articles cover a wide array of academic disciplines outside Political Sciences, Public Administration or International Relations,³ what this survey attempts to illustrate is the ever-growing use of the term and approach in the last decade, reflecting a rising concern and interest in the influence of the European Union (or Europe in a broader sense) at domestic level.

In spite of the interest showed in the study of Europeanization, even after almost two decades of research in this field, there are still diverging opinions on what Europeanization

² Own assessment based on Social Science Citation Index of the ISI Web of Knowledge's data for the period 1980-2010, replicating the survey elaborated by Kevin Featherstone (2003).

³ With regard to the subject areas, this survey includes articles from the field of sociology, business, economics, environmental studies, industrial work and labour, social studies, education or gender (as well as others). If the subject area is restricted to political science, public administration, international relations, area studies and ethnic studies, the most prolific journals are the Journal of European Public Policy, West European Politics, Journal of Common Market Studies, Public Administration, Osteuropa, and Journal of European Social Policy (based on ISI Web of Knowledge, searching for the term 'Europeanization' (or Europeanisation) for the period 2003-2010; only journals with more than ten records were included).

is and how it can be conceptualised. Some scholars attempted to define what Europeanization is not, in order to limit the scope of the concept and make it more manageable (Radaelli, 2000). Accordingly, Europeanization does not include convergence, insofar as convergence is a potential consequence of Europeanization. Furthermore, Europeanization does not include harmonization; Europeanization often results in a 'differential' impact of the EU at domestic level. In fact, this point is widely examined in this thesis, one of the main research questions being exactly why Europeanization leads to dissimilar national responses. Finally, Europeanization is different from integration. Europeanization could not exist without a certain degree of integration, therefore logically coming as a subsequent stage of the integration process (all Radaelli, 2000: 5-6, Vink, 2002: 5-6). Moreover, Europeanization is not synonymous with other factors influencing and causing change at the nation-state level, the most important being globalization (Major, 2005: 178-9).

This thesis, however, takes a different view with regard to whether Europeanization is or it is not synonymous with European integration. This study examines the transformation caused during the process of European integration in the candidate countries and after accession the new member states from CEE. Hence, in the case of accession, the Europeanization can be safely equated with European integration.

The relative agreement on what Europeanization is not fades away when it comes to defining what the distinctive features of this concept are. For instance, Europeanization was defined as 'Brusselsization', in other words '*the steady enhancement of Brussels-based decision-making*' (Allen, 1998: 42). Europeanization is also defined as '*the emergence and development at European level of distinct structures of governance*' (Risse-Kappen, 2001: 3). For Ginsberg (2001: 37), Europeanization stands for a partial important explanation of European foreign policy, denoting the process whereby the CFSP moves

closer to the norms, policies and habits of the EC, yet without becoming more supranational.

A different view, trying to narrow the scope of the concept, equates Europeanization with ‘EU-isation’, insofar as the debate is on the domestic impact of the EU, and not of ‘Europe’. However, this view is contested; the main argument put forward by critics is that Europeanization goes beyond simple ‘EU-isation’, covering a wider range of processes and institutions and including a voluntary component of adaptation even beyond the formal requirements of the EU (Major, 2005: 178, Vink, 2002: 6-7). The term ‘Europeification’ was also employed to depict the fact that the context in which the national policy-making is elaborated should be widened in order to include the EU’s major institutions (Andersen and Eliassen, 1993). In contrast to the power-sharing understanding embedded in the concept of Europeification, other authors contend that Europeanization represents the bottom-up transfer of powers from national governments to supranational institutions as a shift in policy hegemony from national capitals to Brussels (Lawton, 1999: 94). However, for reasons discussed in the next chapter, this thesis does not consider the bottom-up conceptualisation of Europeanization as coherent to the main thrust of the Europeanization approach.

For most authors, Europeanization makes sense only if it is concerned with the way in which European integration causes change at the domestic level. In other words, despite the apparent conceptual confusion, the term Europeanization is mainly used in the literature to denote the influence or the domestic impact of the EU (Sedelmeier, 2006: 4). This conceptualisation considers Europeanization as an

‘incremental process reorienting the direction and shape of politics to the degree that EC political and economic dynamic become part of the organizational logic of national politics and policy-making’ (Ladrech, 1994: 69).

Drawing on Ladrech’s definition, Radaelli contends that Europeanization

‘consists of processes of (a) construction (b) diffusion and (c) institutionalization of formal and informal rules, procedures, policy paradigms, styles, ‘ways of doing things’, and shared beliefs and norms which are first defined and consolidated in the EU policy process and then incorporated in the logic of domestic (national and subnational) discourse, political structures, and public policies’ (Radaelli, 2003: 30).

The definition not only attempts to clarify what Europeanization is, but it also seeks to explain its mechanisms. Similarly, Knill and Lehmkuhl (1999) propose an exclusive top-down mechanism in which Europeanization causes institutional change at the domestic level. This mechanism, they contend, may take three different forms. The first is positive integration. This type of integration is based on an EU pre-existing model. The member states have to comply with this prescribed model. The second type is negative integration. In this case, the EU legislation alters the rule of the game. The third type refers to a weaker mechanism whereby European polity causes domestic change by altering the beliefs and expectations of national actors (Knill and Lehmkuhl, 1999: 2-3). All these three mechanisms are examined in this thesis with regard to the Europeanization of foreign policy in Hungary, Slovakia and Romania.

A related way of conceptualizing the mechanisms of Europeanization was developed by Tanja Börzel and Thomas Risse. The two authors argued that Europeanization can not cause domestic change unless Europeanization is inconvenient. In other words it has to be a certain degree of misfit or gap between the European and national processes, policies, and institutions which creates adaptational pressures. However, the misfit itself is not enough; Europeanization cannot cause domestic change in the absence of facilitating factors (actors or institutions) which respond to the adaptational pressures for change (Börzel and Risse, 2003: 58). The applicability of the ‘goodness of fit’ approach when it comes to foreign policy might be contested, due to the intergovernmental nature of the CSFP. Yet, the implicit assumption that the researcher should look for indicators of discrepancy between the developments at the European and national levels as well as for

facilitating factors is compelling and prompted numerous subsequent studies to adopt this framework. These assumptions are also implicit in this thesis.

Given the variety of definitions, it comes as no surprise that Olsen finds that the concept of Europeanization is multifaceted. He identifies five meanings of the concept. One is that of changes in the external boundaries of the Union, for instance due to the process of enlargement. The second refers to the development of institutions at the European level. The third points to the penetration of national systems of governance by the processes at the European level. The fourth is the export of models of political organization. The fifth, and the last one, equates Europeanization with a project of political unification which is the EU (Olsen, 2002: 923-4). The ‘many faces of Europeanization’, to recall the title of his article, also prompted Olsen, among others, to question whether Europeanization is a really useful concept and not only a fashionable one (Olsen, 2002). This is also one of the objectives of this thesis, namely to discuss the usefulness of the Europeanization approach in explaining domestic transformation of policy-making in the new member states from CEE.

As already pointed out, the study of the Europeanization of foreign policy generated conceptual confusion. If one looks at the Europeanization applied to the study of national foreign policy from a bottom-up perspective, it is hard to avoid the impression that is all about a slightly modified version of intergovernmentalism or liberal intergovernmentalism. The bottom-up approach contends that the EU member states attempt to project their national ideas, preferences and models at the European supranational level. In doing so, the member states

‘Europeanize their previously national priorities and strategies and create a dialectical relationship. By exporting their preferences and models onto EU institutions, they in effect generalise previously national policies onto a larger European stage’ (Wong, 2005: 137).

The national interest is no longer only national, but the EU's interest as well. Moreover, due to the complex nature of the EU polity and policy-making, not only major states but also small states in terms of size and resources may export or upload and therefore Europeanize their own foreign policy priorities.

The similarity between this version of Europeanization and the classical intergovernmentalist account of European integration is striking. Originating in the international relations theory, intergovernmentalism is closely connected with the realist tradition. Amongst the key assumptions are those that the nation-states are the key actors in the international system and the role of supranational institutions or transnational actors does not have a serious influence over the way foreign policy is conducted by national governments. In the context of European integration theory, the intergovernmentalist version of realism in international relations contends that the direction and speed of the integration process is a function of the decisions and actions taken by the national governments of the member states (Nugent, 2003: 482).

These intergovernmentalist assumptions found practical confirmation in a series of events that slowed down the pace of the integration process during the 1970s. The most important of these was the so called 'empty chair crisis', when the French representatives refused to attend any meeting of the Community due to conflicting views over the financing of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) (for a historical account of the crises, see for instance Dinan, 2004). The consequence of this crisis was the Luxembourg compromise, in 1966, agreeing that the Commission should consult more closely with member states before launching legal initiatives, implicitly granting national governments the right to veto the Commission's proposals.

This moment is also important for it marks the beginning of a slow but steady decline of the integration process during the 1970s. This process was mirrored by the

decline of neofunctionalism as the dominant theoretical approach to European integration. The intergovernmentalist critique of neofunctionalism received a new impetus. The real-life political and economic developments in Europe confirmed the intergovernmentalist view that national governments remain the drivers of European integration.

The most significant proponent of this approach was Stanley Hoffman, who, throughout the 1960s, attempted to explain the place and role of the Western European nation-states in relation to the integrationist project embodied by the European Community. He criticised the neofunctionalist ‘logic of synthesis’, embodied by the Monnet method. Hoffman argued that the logic of synthesis restricts the freedom of national governments. In contrast, what he called the ‘logic of diversity’ implies that in areas of key importance,

‘nations prefer the self-controlled uncertainty of national self-reliance, to the uncontrolled uncertainty of the blending process’ (Hoffman, 2001: 49).

In relation to areas of key importance, Hoffman made the distinction between ‘high’ and ‘low’ politics as a way to explain why integration was possible in technocratic and less controversial fields, but generates conflict in matters where the national autonomy and identity were threatened (Rosamond, 2000: 77).

Likewise, the liberal intergovernmentalist approach, developed by Andrew Moravcsik, continues the intergovernmentalist tradition and has three constitutive building blocks: the assumption of rational state behaviour, a liberal theory of national preference formation, and an intergovernmentalist analysis of interstate negotiations (see Moravcsik, 1993, 1999). Therefore, at its core lies the assumption that the process of European integration is the result of competing national preferences, bargained over in high-level multilateral negotiations.

In essence, both classical and liberal intergovernmentalist approaches assume that European integration is a function of the willingness of the member states to cooperate and delegate powers to the EU; ultimately, the national governments have the last word with regard to the direction and intensity of supranational integration. Notwithstanding the numerous critiques of its assumptions and approach, intergovernmentalism has been widely used in the study of European integration, including that of Europeanization.

In the bottom-up conception of the Europeanization of foreign policy, states are the main actors and agents of change in contrast with the apparent passivity that characterize them according to top-down approaches. The member states are the active agents that use the European Union as a platform to promote and project national foreign policy ideas, preferences, and models. Whether a state is large or small, holding important capabilities or not, the EU might provide a better framework for the projection of national interests and preferences in the world than a country's own resources would afford (Wong, 2005: 137). At the same time, a country may choose to play a dual game, using the EU as a platform for promoting some specific objectives, while acting outside the EU framework to reach other objectives.

The main flaw of Europeanization understood from a bottom-up perspective is that it conflates two distinct approaches, namely Europeanization itself and intergovernmentalism. In contrast, the top-down version of Europeanization of foreign policy provides for greater internal consistency with the main thrust of the Europeanization research agenda. As highlighted in the literature review chapter, there is a broad agreement with regard to the direction in which Europeanization operates as the domestic impact of European integration on polity, politics, and policy (Börzel and Risse, 2003: 60, Caporaso, 2007: 27, Delanty and Rumford, 2005: 6, Vink, 2002). Whether one speaks about policies in the areas where the European Community has exclusive, shared or support competences

in relation to member states, the fundamental logic directing the research focus is from the EU towards the member states. Therefore, the top-down approach is the one favoured by this thesis.

Not only reasons of a theoretical nature justify the choice of a top-down approach. Another motive is closely connected to the length of membership. This is an important practical consideration. At the time of writing up this thesis, for Hungary and Slovakia the experience of being EU members is 5 years while for Romania it is 2 years. One may argue that this is a short period for assessing how effective a new member state is in projecting its national preferences at EU level. Arguably, at this stage it is more fruitful to examine the domestic impact of the EU rather than the other way round.

3.3. Europeanization of foreign policy: a systems approach

The reason why this thesis uses the systems approach to foreign policy analysis is that this model has an important heuristic value. The model is employed as an organizing device for specifying the relevant variables and defining the boundaries between them. The author of the political systems approach, David Easton, did not devise this theory having in mind international politics or foreign policy analysis (see Jackson and Sørensen, 2003: 283); however, he pointed out that one can equally see the international realm as a system governed by similar rules to those characterizing the domestic political system (Easton, 1965: 487). This is exactly what Simon Hix does in his study of the EU as a political system, contending that the EU has all the essential elements characterizing any democratic political system (see Hix, 2005).

The aim here is not to discuss the application of the systems approach to the realm of international politics. The research focus of this thesis is on the impact of European integration on the national systems of foreign policy in three of the new member states of

the EU. Before describing in more detail the way in which the systems theory is employed here, a few general points about the foreign policy system approach are necessary. The subsequent paragraphs outline the basic components of the systems approach applied to foreign policy, as developed by Clarke (1989: 27-55). Having as a starting point the research design developed by Michael Brecher for his analysis of Israeli foreign policy (1972), Clarke advanced five essential features that any analytical framework for the study of foreign policy should include. First, he maintains, any endeavour to specify a foreign policy system has to detail the components of the system; in other words, to identify which forces matter, how they are different from other forces, and what is their place within the system. The second feature is that the system has to be conceptualized in a holistic manner. Notwithstanding the fact that some components of the system benefit from a greater understanding than others, the system is a whole, the parts being subsumed to the entirety. Third, the conception of the system is dynamic. Because the object of study is a system of human action, which is intrinsically fluid, the researcher has to describe and explain a reality in continuous transformation. Fourth, the system is always in a relation of interdependence with its environment. The fifth and the last feature is that the components of the system are also interdependent, reacting with each other (all from Clarke, 1989: 31).

The national foreign policy system is seen as an open system fed by inputs and producing outputs and feedback loops. The inputs are produced by internal and external environments of the state and create the context in which the decision-makers operate. Inputs create pressures or demands and provide for supports and reinforcements for decision-makers. Easton defines inputs of demand or pressure as

‘an expression of opinion that an authoritative allocation with regard to particular subject matter should or should not be made by those responsible for doing so’ (Easton, 1965: 38).

The demands create disturbance or stress in the system. An example of input as pressure or demand is the accession criteria that the Central and East European countries had to satisfy in order to be invited to open the negotiation talks. In the foreign policy domain, the EU policy in the field of arms export control, the EU policy towards Russia, or the EU recognition policy towards the independence of Kosovo are only a few examples of external inputs creating demands or pressures for national decision-makers.

However, the system's environment, external or internal, does not provide only inputs of demand, but also inputs of support. The inputs of support are described as expressions of political support from allies or less visible dimensions such as the power of traditions, continuity or the like (Clarke, 1989: 33). As illustration, one may consider the case of a member state's participation in a EU crisis management operation. An input of support may be the fact that there is no internal opposition within the governmental coalition as regards sending a military contingent to the EU mission; likewise, the country may have important political or economic interests in the region where the EU mission is to be deployed.

The range of outputs the foreign policy system may produce is wide. Easton conceptualizes outputs in a broad sense, as '*authoritative allocation of values*', expressed in the form of binding decisions, their implementing actions and certain associated types of behaviour, which are able to influence the environment of the system (Easton, 1965: 349-51). In other words, the outputs stand for governmental decisions and policies.⁴ Between inputs, both of demands and support, and outputs, there is the category of processes. Easton is not very specific about how inputs are transformed into outputs within the

⁴ In an attempt to order different types of outputs of a foreign policy system, Clarke (1989: 33-4) identifies five categories: informational, declaratory, procedural, administration of transfer payments, and overt or physical action.

‘black-box’ of the state, although attempts had been made elsewhere to address this shortcoming (see Almond and Powell, 1966).

A final step in the operation of a foreign policy system refers to the way in which outputs feed back into the system. The outputs influence the environment of the system and in a circular loop end up by altering the inputs of the system. The feedback effect is the feature that provides the systems approach with the analytical tool to capture the dynamic nature of any system of human action. However, the study of feed-back is outside the interest of this thesis. As mentioned, the scope here is limited to the impact of the EU on the national systems of foreign policy.

While the systems approach exhibits features of a holistic approach (Caramani, 2008, Clarke, 1989), Europeanization is a middle range theory (Olsen, 2007: 91); it deals with a limited number of variables, which allows the researcher to investigate empirically the relationships between them, as well as with other variables (Layder, 1998: 16). Within a systemic framework, Europeanization stands for the relationship between two types of variables. On the one hand, it is the external input created by the political processes and policies at the level of the European Union feeding into member states’ foreign policy systems. In terms of outputs of Europeanization, this thesis examines three components most likely to affect the nature of foreign policy:

- a) institutional framework of policy-making;
- b) socialization of identities and interests; and
- c) practical conduct or behaviour of foreign policy.

The first component refers to the policy-making process and the infrastructure underpinning the elaboration and implementation of foreign policy. The second component relates to the ideational motives and preferences embedded in the national cultures and

identities and how these are affected by Europeanization. Finally, the last component deals with the policy itself, its main objectives, and means to implement the policy.

As already pointed out, the key questions of this research are as follows:

- a) What is the extent of the impact of Europeanization on the foreign policy of the new member states?
- b) Why is the impact of Europeanization uneven across countries?

This thesis asks whether and to what extent Europeanization has a differentiated impact upon various states, but also moves further and attempts to explain the divergence in the behaviour of the old as well as new member states of the EU. The conduct of European nation states is often uncommon and sometimes unpredictable and inconsistent although in the official discourse the theme of common interests and values is omnipresent. Therefore, the differentiated national response to Europeanization is one of the puzzling issues that this thesis attempts to explain. There is a need to differentiate the relevance of Europeanization as an independent explanatory factor from other competing, alternative explanations, such as the role of domestic factors or globalisation forces (see Lehmkuhl, 2007: 343). The mediating domestic factors provide the key to understanding why, given similar external inputs, different countries react in different ways to Europeanization. The same reasoning may apply to the way in which Globalization influences the national states and why do they react in different ways to otherwise similar pressures. This is also an important reason for preferring to focus on domestic specificities as a way to understand differentiated reactions.

As already illustrated, the role of domestic sources of foreign policy or the *Innenpolitik* is key in understanding foreign policy behaviour. As Christopher Hill remarks, it would be an error to assume that

‘state behaviour can be understood solely by reference to the external realm of power balances, geopolitics and the anarchical society’ (Hill, 1996b: 5).

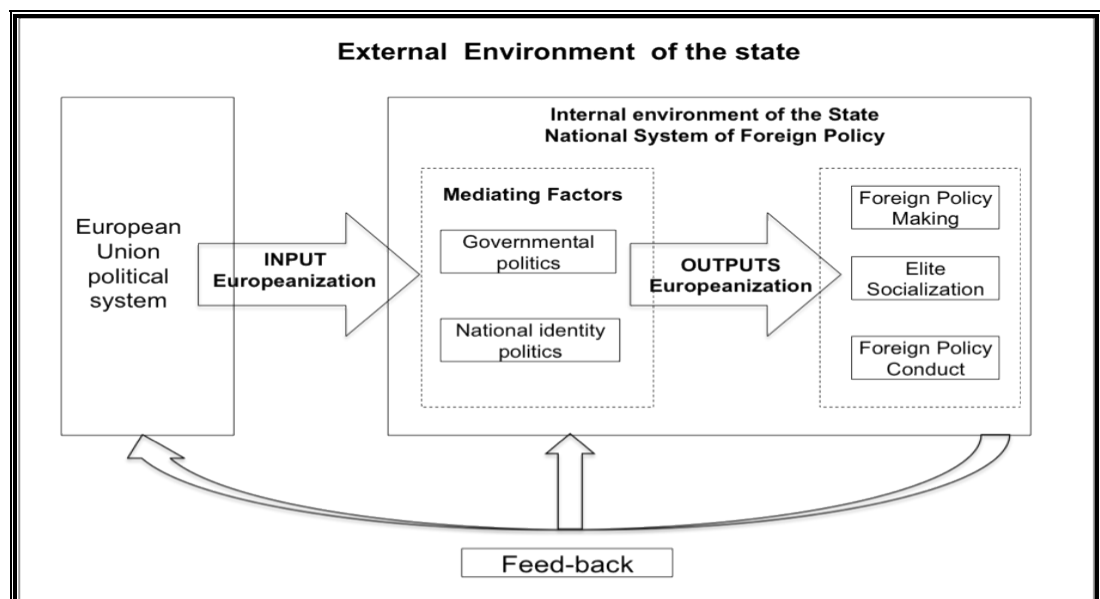
He enumerates domestic sources such as constitutional structure, bureaucracy, political parties, political culture, media and public opinion (Hill, 1996). Also, analyzing the foreign policies of the old member states of the EU, Manners and Whitman identify five domestic factors influencing foreign policy-making, namely the constitutional design, the role of sub-national governments, the relationship between governments and parties, the role of special interest groups and the breakdown of domestic-foreign distinction (Manners and Whitman, 2000: 252).

The analytical framework proposed in this thesis builds on two distinct sets of mediating domestic factors, which are assumed to explain the differentiated impact of Europeanization:

- a) governmental politics;
- b) the politics of national identity.

The causal relationship between inputs and outputs may be graphically represented as in figure below (see Fig. 1).

Fig 1. Graphical representation of the foreign policy system approach employed by this thesis



Before explaining this graphic, it is important to clarify the semantic use of ‘causal relationship’ as employed above. At least with regard to the issue of socialization and identity politics, the term ‘cause’ is not used in a positivist vein, meaning a directly observable, ‘out-there’ relationship that can be quantified. As John Ruggie (1998: 869) aptly observed, when it comes to ideational factors causation simply does not exist and it is more appropriate to approach this matter in terms of ‘reasons for action’ rather than ‘causes of action’. Hence, Europeanization ‘causing’ a change of identities and interests through the process of socialization does in fact mean that European integration simply creates the historical context wherein certain normative and policy practices might emerge.

With regard to the figure above, the left arrow pointing towards the domestic level generically represents the input of Europeanization. The input of Europeanization is filtered by the two mediating factors of identity and governmental politics. The causal effect of the two mediating factors is represented by a block arrow pointing towards the three outcomes to be explained. However, it is worth highlighting that while the role of governmental politics is crucial in explaining all three outcomes of the Europeanization process, the role of the national identity politics is more salient with regard to the socialization of identities and interests and the perception and definition of national interests to be promoted and defended by foreign policy means.

The politics of national identity is understood here as an idiosyncratic set of ideas held by national policy-makers about political community; these ideas are used to activate a sense of unity and solidarity in order to legitimise political action, including in the field of foreign policy (Aggestam, 2004a: 40). These ideas about the national political community and its relationship with the outside world represent the main mediating factor between the input of Europeanization and the expected outcome of the socialization of identities and interests at national level.

Governmental politics is one of the key determinants of a country's foreign policy. This thesis proposes a broader view on governmental politics, one which looks equally at the role played by top political leaders or high-level civil servants, their political parties within the coalition cabinets, as well as inter-ministerial and inter-state agencies competition. In pluralistic societies, the fragmentation of the executive power is an important factor affecting the overall direction and content of the policy process. The overwhelming majority of governments in the three countries studied in this thesis have been coalition cabinets. Political parties have different agendas, ideologically oriented, which are reflected also in the way in which they see the organization and conduct of foreign policy. The change of governments following elections is usually being watched with great interest because it may result in a change of foreign policy preferences.

Likewise, there are differences between a majority and a coalition government. In a coalition, multiple partners may come up with different agendas and competing visions, acting as veto-players. The mediating role of the veto-players was conceptualized especially in terms of the dispersion of power at domestic level, which in turn empowers different actors (at regional or local levels, organized as unions, business associations etc) with diverse interests to oppose or divert the constraining influence of Europeanization. The same is true in the case of coalition governments. Far from being a unitary actor, the political and policy agenda of a coalition cabinet reflects not only the different agendas of constituent political parties, but also competing intra-party interests. Within a coalition cabinet, there is a structural threat of blockage or dissolution. Any political party, member of the governing coalition, may block a foreign policy initiative agreed by the other members of the cabinet by threatening to defect from the government, which may even require new elections (Hagan et al., 2001: 171). Under what specific circumstances this

mix of competing interests has an influence of the political agenda and policy process is a matter that this thesis explores at length.

The following section looks in more detail at each of the three individual outcomes of the Europeanization process, trying to clarify the contentious aspects, laying out the analytical approach and spelling out the research questions.

3.4. Three Dimensions of Europeanization

i) Europeanization as institutional change

The first dimension focuses on the institutional change of the foreign policy system in the three new member states. The neoinstitutionalist approach to foreign policy highlights the role of institutions in shaping action (Lecours, 2005: 8). The major question asked by the historical institutionalist branch of neo-institutionalism relates to why common events or processes lead to different outcomes in different countries through time and space (see Lecours, 2005: 14). Hence, this approach is deemed appropriate for answering the question why, given the common constraints and opportunities posed by the Europeanization process, the national systems of foreign policy were designed differently. Accordingly, the historical institutionalist methodology is used to answer this question.⁵

A common critique of the neo-institutionalist approach is that it is more comfortable in explaining continuity than change. However, the neo-institutionalist literature puts forward three arguments on the possibility of institutional change: a) the thesis of exogenous shocks (historical institutionalism); b) the idea that institutions are transformed when they become dysfunctional or yield sub-optimal outcomes (rationalistic approaches); and c) isomorphism and convergence (sociological version).

⁵ The practical use of the historical institutionlist methodology is outlined in the section dedicated to methodology.

The external shock view argues that domestic processes of institutional reproduction resulting in institutional continuity may be disturbed by exogenous factors such as international events. External factors may break the institutional reproduction cycle and create opportunities for institutional transformation. The European integration process is the external opportunity that created the incentive for internal transformation, including in the field of foreign policy. There is a wide agreement with regard to the fact that all member states have to adjust institutionally to the requirements of participating in the EU system of foreign policy-making. For the old member states, this process was not unidirectional, since they have the chance to express their own preferences on the design of decision and policy-making process of European foreign and security policy.

Yet, for the new member states, the adaptation of the national systems of foreign policy-making to the formal and informal functional requirements of the CFSP was a precondition of the accession process. Therefore, the institutional reorganization undertaken in view of EU membership and after integration is one of the most visible indicators of EU impact at the domestic level. The design of the national systems of foreign policy before accession was different, therefore not adequate for performing the role of a member state. Policy-makers had to work towards transforming the old institutional structures according to the requirements of participation in the EU foreign policy. The institutional transformation affected institutions located at both domestic and European level, although at different temporal stages. Domestic institutions located at European level denote mainly the permanent representations to the European Union. In fact, the European level became an issue only when the accession process was almost completed.

The second argument is that institutional transformation takes place when institutions are dysfunctional and create sub-optimal outcomes and is the result of strategic decisions of political actors (see Lecours, 2005: 12). As an example, one may think of the result of

the general elections in the year 2004 in Romania, or in Slovakia of the year 2006, leading to new governmental coalitions. If the change of government is associated with measures of institutional reform in the field of European affairs, this is an indicator with regard to the fact that the institutional change was the result of an inter-coalition bargaining rather than EU demands. Similarly, the competition amongst different ministries or executives agencies for resources and power may influence the dynamic of institutional transformation.

The third argument is that of institutional convergence through isomorphic transformation. In the absence of a unique European administrative model, including in the field of European foreign policy, the hypothesis that institutions in a similar domain tend to look alike seems counter-intuitive and needs empirical evidence. However, one may look at the relatively similar structures of the permanent representations of Hungary, Slovakia and Romania, and to believe that this is an indicator of convergence. Alternatively, one may think that it rather reflects a rational approach to the need of replicating the functional and structural configuration of the Council of the European Union⁶.

This thesis makes a clear distinction between organizational change and institutional change. Michael Bauer points out that the difference between the two might be conceived as the distinction between ‘low’ and ‘high’ politics, where organizational change is subsumed to the former category, while institutional change falls into the category of high politics of inter-organizational engineering (Bauer, 2008: 628). Also, this thesis is less interested in the subtleties of the decision-making; the focus is more on the structural and functional aspects of the policy-making process. The distinction between decision-making and policy-making process is the distinction between discrete decisions and a long-series

⁶ Throughout this thesis, when it comes to the Council of the European Union the following terminology is used interchangeably: Council of the EU, EU Council, Council of Ministers, or simply the Council.

of interrelated activities; it is the distinction between once-and-for-all acts and a long-term process (see Cherns, 1979, Rose, 1969).

Another point that needs to be clarified is about the relationship between the systems of foreign policy and the broader systems of coordinating European affairs. For most of the 1990s, European integration was treated as a top foreign policy priority by the CEE countries (Vachudova, 2005) and handled accordingly by the actor best placed to deal with it, namely the ministries of foreign affairs (Dimitrova and Toshkov, 2007: 969). In this way, the two systems have partially overlapped. Therefore, the analysis of institutional change in the three countries goes beyond the foreign policy system, to include the broad system of coordinating national foreign policy and European affairs.

To sum up, by examining institutional change in Hungary, Slovakia and Romania, this thesis intends to answer the following two research questions:

Research question 1: What is the nature and extent of institutional change of the national foreign policy systems to the formal and/or informal requirements of participation in the EU foreign policy?

This research question aims to provide descriptive empirical data about:

a) the role of the MFA in the system of national coordination and the relationship between the Foreign Service and the prime-minister's office or other state agencies responsible for coordination of European affairs; and

b) the changing structure and functions of national coordination of European affairs and foreign policy at European level by looking at the Permanent Representations to the EU of Hungary, Slovakia and Romania and their relationships with the capitals.

Research question 2: Why does the institutional transformation in view of European integration reflect different patterns across the national systems of foreign policy in the three countries?

This last research question mirrors in fact the question why the impact of Europeanization is uneven across countries. It is concerned with the puzzling issue of continuing diversity against the background of harmonization pressures of the European integration. Governmental politics is assumed to play a more important role in the refashioning of the national systems of coordination of European affairs and foreign policy-making than the Europeanization process itself.

ii) Europeanization as socialization of identities and interests

The second line of enquiry deals with the way in which the Europeanization process affects the self-identification of national foreign policy-makers. Europeanization in this context is synonymous with socialization, defined as internalization of EU substantive and procedural norms and rules. In a broader sense, the Europeanization of identities and interests represents an instance of international socialization. The social constructivist assumption underpinning this approach is that international institutions may be conceived as social environments that socialize state or state agents (Checkel, 2007: 15). For many authors, the European Union stands for the perfect case of a dense and complex network of institutions and institutionalized practices, rules and norms challenging national identities and loyalties (Checkel, 2007).

There are numerous obstacles hindering international socialization but probably the most important has to do with the previous socialization within the framework of national political culture and identities. Historically, the influence of the national community over its constitutive sub-groups was so overwhelming that the state became the main agent responsible for the direction and weight of the socialization process (Levi, 1974: 157). Therefore, the issue of international socialization within the EU framework needs to be examined against the background of national identity politics.

In the case of the previous dimension of Europeanization, the influence of European integration as an external input is contrasted with the competing explanatory variables of governmental politics. In the case of this second dimension of Europeanization, the socialization of identities and interests is also examined against the background of the politics of national and European identity in each of the three countries. For this reason, the chapter dedicated to this matter examines the main features of the discourse and politics of national identity in the three countries selected here as case-studies. As underlined above, the politics of national identity is defined here as the set of ideas held by national policy-makers about political community, which are used to activate a sense of unity and solidarity in order to legitimise political action, including in the field of foreign policy (Aggestam, 2004a: 40).

The Europeanization literature identifies cognitive and normative structures alongside public policies or domestic legal and political configurations as domains of EU influence (Radaelli, 2003: 35-36). For scholars working in the field of Europeanization of foreign policy, the study of cognitive and normative aspects offers a welcome window of opportunity. This is mainly because the weak formal powers of the EU coupled with the strong role of national governments makes it difficult for the researcher to uncover hard empirical evidence with regard to the domestic impact of the EU. Instead, some scholars contend, the process of European integration and the participation in the framework of European foreign policy may lead to adoption of supranational and procedural norms and rules (March and Olsen, 2004, Smith, 2004).

For the purpose of this thesis, the norms and rules characterizing EU foreign policy cooperation are taken for granted; in other words, the research undertaken by other scholars is not questioned. However, what this thesis questions is whether and to what

extent there is evidence of socialization of foreign policy elites from the new member states.

There is already a rich body of literature on Europeanization of foreign policy, which makes the point that the constant interaction, debate, and trial-and-error learning during the last thirty years of cooperation in the realm of foreign policy resulted in the emergence and institutionalization of a specific European ‘culture of compromise’. This culture of compromise contrasts with the traditional intergovernmental style of cooperation specific to other international organizations. In practical terms, this means attitudes and behaviour that prioritize the common European interest instead of thinking solely in terms of national interests, and preferring the EU framework of cooperation to alternative means, either national or international.

Accordingly, the state representatives’ preferences are defined and redefined through interaction in the highly normative and institutionalized framework of cooperation of the EU Council. This leads to a diplomatic coordination reflex, which grew up as a reciprocal disposition of national representatives participating in EU foreign policy cooperation (see Glarbo, 1999: 644, Nuttall, 1992). In summary, the EU culture of compromise refers to the following informal norms and rules: consultation, consensus-seeking, trust, reciprocity, mutual responsiveness, respect for other member states’ *domaines réservés* and the prohibition against hard bargaining (see Lewis, 2000: 261, Smith, 2004: 122).

The two main research questions here are as follows:

Research question 1. Do the experts and diplomats from the Permanent Representations hold different views on the aims and means of EU foreign policy from those in the capitals, working in the ministries of foreign affairs?

The assumption here is that the process of socialization affects differently various state agents involved in the policy process at European and national levels. The level of

analysis is the individual involved in policy formulation. For some authors, the state as a corporate agent is the most appropriate unit of analysis for studying the impact of socialization. The argument is that there is no need for individuals to internalise international beliefs and rules insofar as these are institutionalised in domestic policy-making process (see Schimmelfennig et al., 2006: 112). However, this approach overlooks the main link in the causal chain mediating between international and domestic system, namely the individual policy-maker. As Werner Levi pointed out more than three decades ago, the target must be the individual relevant to the making and executing of foreign policy; the socialization of states is in reality the socialization of individuals (Levi, 1974: 150;61).

For this reason, this thesis makes the distinction between two groups of state officials, according to their proximity to policy-making in Brussels. There is, on the one hand, the group of national representatives working in the Permanent Representations to the EU, in Brussels. The other group consists mainly of policy-makers from the foreign affairs ministries in the capitals and to a lesser extent the staff dealing with European affairs in the office of the Government and European Committees of the national parliaments.

I assume that the national representatives in Brussels act as agents of Europeanization of national foreign policy, not only as promoters and defenders of national interest at the EU level. The national representatives in Brussels, interacting continuously with their counterparts in various formations within the Council of the EU, with representatives from the General Secretariat of the Council and European Commission, are placed in a specific cultural environment. At least theoretically, this environment has a strong socialization potential. If indicators of socialization are to be found anywhere, then this place is the Permanent Representation of a member state. In this sense, the position of

national diplomats or representatives is dual, being involved in a two-level game between national capital and Brussels (see Putnam, 1988). The national representatives play a different role from the traditional diplomatic services, notwithstanding the fact that the role of the ministries of foreign affairs is changing in the EU context (Hocking and Spence, 2005). On the other hand, the policy-makers from national capitals, working in the ministries of foreign affairs or elsewhere are less socialized into EU norms and rules and express less supranational conceptions than their colleagues in Brussels.

The second research question asks about the type of socialization. James March and Johan Olsen (1998, 2004) have argued that action within an institutional setting is driven either by a logic of anticipated consequences and previously defined preferences, or by a logic of appropriateness and a sense of identity. While the former is based on rational-choice models and emphasizes the egoistic and self-interested nature of human agents, the latter argues that the norms and rules of a given community are followed because they are considered right and legitimate (March and Olsen, 1998: 951). However, the two authors admit that in reality the logic of action within an international organization is rather blurred, mixing both types of logic (March and Olsen, 1998: 952).

Research question 2. Is elite socialization simply a process of learning of new norms and rules or does it have a deeper character that affects the inner self-identification of the participant agents?

At minimum, the result of the socialization process is expected to facilitate a more balanced and flexible approach of national foreign policy actions within the EU framework. Ideally, the normative and substantive norms underpinning EU foreign policy are not only shared, but also interpreted in the same manner by all member states, paving the way for common action. The topic of collective action is further explored in the following section. There is a close link between the interpretation of norms and foreign

policy action. Besides, the perception of the way in which power is exercised within the EU has a key role in shaping the outputs of the Europeanization process.

iii) Europeanization of foreign policy action

The third dimension of Europeanization approached in this thesis refers to the extent of change of the conduct of foreign policy. It shifts the analytical focus from foreign policy-making to the actional and visible conduct of foreign policy. What I mean by ‘visible conduct’ may be inferred from the following definition:

‘Foreign policies consist of those actions which, expressed in the form of explicitly stated goals, commitments and/or directives, are pursued by governmental representatives acting on behalf of their sovereign communities, are directed toward objectives, conditions and actors – both governmental and non-governmental – which they want to affect and which lie beyond their territorial legitimacy’ (Carlsnaes, 2002: 335).

The use of this operational definition of foreign policy is justified by four reasons. The first is the scope of foreign policy, delineated as formalized objectives and commitments. The second refers to the issue of legitimacy. The national officials are the legitimate representatives of the state. The third relates to the purposive character of foreign policy. The national officials endeavour to influence the external environment according to their own preferences. The fourth element is the distinction between internal and external realms, the latter falling outside national control. Another observation is that this definition makes the distinction between the official discourse, which clearly states the interests, objectives, and tools of national foreign policy, and the practical behaviour of the government oriented towards the achievements of national goals.

Accordingly, this thesis looks at these two general aspects, which are formulated as the following two research questions:

Research question 1. To what extent do the officially stated foreign policy priorities and commitments, interests and the means to achieve them reflect a more salient European dimension after accession?

Research question 2. To what extent does the conduct of foreign policy reflect a preference for EU channels rather than using other national/international tools?⁷

The timescale covers mainly the period after the opening of the accession talks until 2009, although some reflections are being made on the nature of policy preferences in the three countries after the fall of communist regimes. There is clear evidence that the initial foreign policy choices, made in the early 1990s, were different across countries. At the same time, even if eventually all CEE countries firmly turned the course of their foreign policy towards Euro-Atlantic integration, there are important nuances as regards the balance - occasionally even tension - between this priority and other foreign policy objectives. Therefore, even if the focus is placed upon the last decade, it is also important to examine the way policy developed during the first decade after the Cold War in order to understand the evolution of political thinking about the European integration before and after formal accession.

At least before accession, one may assume that the inputs of demand can be easily associated with the obligations of candidate countries to align their national positions to the EU's statements, declarations, common positions and joint actions. However, after accession the voluntary nature of EU foreign and security policy means that it is more difficult to identify the inputs of demand. Here, it is important to take into consideration the context within which a specific national debate on foreign policy matters takes place. While it is unlikely to expect a radical change of the national strategic priorities in the foreign policy field, one may anticipate noticing a change of tone, of the way in which

⁷ Manners and Whitman (2000: 10-12) refer to this as 'foreign policy with or without the EU' as an indicator of the Europeanization of foreign policy (see the literature review chapter as well, pp. 18-9).

these goals are expressed in the official discourse. While no direct imposition is to be expected from the EU on national authorities, developments at the European level create and induce stress into the national system of foreign policy. Eventually, it is national politics, either as governmental politics or identity politics that bear the responsibility for the way in which policy outcomes are formulated.

The EU membership has greatly increased the scope of foreign policy in all member states far beyond their own capacity. At the same time, membership does not offer only opportunities for external action, but also imposes constraints when national preferences diverge from the mainstream European position. Uwe Puetter and Antje Wiener (2007) have argued that in spite of the assumptions about shared norms and community of values, in situations of external crises the normative divergences among the member states often lead to contradictions and divergences as regards the appropriate policy responses. Since its inception, the gradual development of the Common Foreign and Security Policy was deeply undermined by acute divergences amongst the member states in cases of external crises. As an illustration, it suffices to recall the recognition of successor states from the former Yugoslav Federation, the war in Iraq in 2003, the NATO airstrikes against Yugoslavia in 1999, or the recognition of Kosovo independence in 2008. The proposed assumption for these failures is that a change of national preferences is improbable when a specific combination of factors located at domestic, European and/or international level occurs in crisis and the perception of this situation by the local foreign policy elite determines a radically different interpretation of the facts. It does represent the limits of Europeanization of national foreign policy when it contradicts directly the official definition of what the national interest is.

3.5. Summary

This chapter put forward the analytical framework on which this research is built. It consisted of three main sections. The first section reviewed and discussed the conceptual confusion resulting from the way in which Europeanization has been conceptualized. Against this backdrop, an attempt was made to map the genesis of the Europeanization of foreign policy approach, placed at the interface and drawing from both foreign policy analysis and European integration theory. It clarified the way in which this thesis employs the concept of Europeanization as the strictly top-down impact of the EU at domestic level. Hence, it critically rejected the use of the bottom-up approach on the grounds that it overstretches the concept of Europeanization and it runs the risk of conflating it with liberal intergovernmentalism. The second section moved on to describe the systems approach used in this thesis as an organizing device able to structure clearly the relationship between the external input of Europeanization, the mediating factors of governmental politics and the politics of national identity and the outputs of the Europeanization process, namely institutional adaptation, elite socialization and the change of foreign policy content. Finally, the last section unpacked the way in which this thesis conceptualizes the three outputs of the Europeanization process with reference to historical institutionalism and social constructivist approaches to foreign policy change. The next chapter is dedicated to the methodological apparatus. It links theory to data collection and illustrates how this thesis plans to answer the research questions and test the assumptions.

CHAPTER 4

FROM THEORY TO EMPIRICAL DATA

4.1. Research strategy

As outlined in the previous sections, the three outputs of the Europeanization process that this thesis aims to examine are institutional change, elite socialization, and foreign policy conduct. The selection of these three outcomes of the Europeanization process is justified by two reasons. On the one hand, these three aspects have been extensively approached by the Europeanization literature (see also p. 7). By choosing the same factors to analyse, although in a different context and using different case studies, this thesis aims to satisfy the criterion of consistency. In other words, it attempts to employ the same, or at least as similar as possible, assumptions which are made by the core of the research agenda on the Europeanization of foreign policy. If similar assumptions, applied to different case studies, confirm the results of previous research, then this fact is evidence of the validity of the research agenda itself. Alternatively, contrasting or different results may lead to rethinking and reformulation of the initial assumptions.

On the other hand, the three outcomes of Europeanization cover core aspects of foreign policy: a) the system of foreign policy-making and the institutional infrastructure underpinning the process; b) the process of identity reconstruction, which is an important assumption of the Europeanization of foreign policy research agenda; and c) the practical content of foreign policy, its values, aims and means. Along these lines, this thesis is concerned with both material and ideational factors, both structural and process related aspects of foreign policy. There is an implicit risk of overextending the scope of research, arising from both conceptual and logistical challenges. In spite of these challenges, I maintain that a three-layered approach covering institutions, identities, and interests is

more beneficial for a deeper understanding of how and to what extent the EU is a source of foreign policy change in Hungary, Slovakia, and Romania.

The fact that the choice of the three outcomes to be explained derives from existing assumptions poses the task of making a decision between either deductive or inductive research strategies (alternatively, an option can be made for the hypothetical-deductive method).⁸ The fact that the impact of European integration on foreign policy in Hungary, Slovakia, and Romania is a relatively understudied phenomenon would suggest that an inductive strategy has to be followed. There is an uncharted territory out there; the facts are relatively unknown and, therefore, the researcher should start by collecting data. At a later stage, subsequent to data analysis, the researcher is expected to generate a theory to make sense of the data collected. The main difficulty with this approach is that it overlooks the rich literature on the Europeanization of foreign policy in the old member states, the burgeoning literature on the new members, candidate countries or even non-member states, which already provides for a substantive body of empirical data. Far from being a *tabula rasa*, the field abounds in empirical findings of different kinds.

Given the above, this thesis employs a deductive approach. It contends that the collection of further empirical data from overlooked or under-researched case studies is, of course, important, but even more significant is testing the factual data against existing theory in order to refine and improve the theory and eventually to contribute to the growth of the research agenda itself.

Kenneth Waltz, being critical towards the inductive method, explains that the accumulation of empirical data by observations and experience never guides the observer straight to knowledge of causes, because data do not speak for themselves (Waltz, 1979:

⁸ The hypothetico-deductive method combines both inductive and deductive approaches, in a two-way process of inductively building hypotheses based on empirical observation, mapping deductively their consequences and testing them in order to reformulate or reject according to the results (see Walliman, N. S. R. (2006) *Social Research Methods*. Course Companion. 1st ed. London; Thousand Oaks: Sage.)

4). In a similar way, the point was made that the accumulation of facts is only the first step that has to be followed by inferring beyond empirical data to something broader and unobservable (King et al., 1994: 9). Any set of empirical data needs to be interpreted in order to be relevant. The aim of data collection is explanation. However, this project does not follow Waltz's view of theory because he approaches theory as statements that explain laws, laws being defined as invariant relations between given variables (Waltz, 1979: 5).

The approach of this thesis is that the role of data collection is to provide the basis for description as a necessary step towards explanation and theory testing. In other words, this project starts by answering the 'what' question: a) what sort of impact does the EU have on the foreign policy of the new member states? and also b) whether and to what extent the Europeanization cause convergence or/and divergence? The second step is to look at the 'why' question. As long as all candidate countries have to adapt to the same institutional requirements of participating in the EU Common Foreign and Security Policy, why is there variation across institutional settings designed by each individual country for answering these requirements? At the same time, if the substantive content of foreign policy, defined as strategic priorities and means to achieve them, is not being altered as a consequence of accession, why does this happen? Does the way in which power relations within the EU are perceived in the new member states alter the outcomes of Europeanization? Does the initial set of assumptions still hold or have they to be refined and updated?

This thesis follows a deductive strategy. The option for a deduction strategy suggests that the type of data envisaged for testing the theory is of a quantitative type. Any research strategy entails a particular orientation to social research, contrasting quantitative with qualitative approaches. The difference between the two goes far beyond the simple fact that quantitative approaches use statistical measurement while the qualitative ones do not.

The two approaches are rooted in different epistemological foundations. On the one hand, the quantitative approach is based on a deductive orientation to theory testing, a positivist scientific model and an objectivist view of reality. On the other hand, the qualitative approach follows an inductive path towards generating theory, using an interpretivist epistemological orientation and a view of social reality which assumes that the world is the creation of people's ideas (see Bryman, 2008: 22). However, it was argued that this distinction is ambiguous, being seen either as a fundamental dichotomy or a useless and false one (Layder, 1993, in Bryman, 2008: 21-2). In reality, there are studies which, for instance, use qualitative data to test theory, as well as quantitative analysis having interpretivist implications; therefore, the use of mixed research methods, combining quantitative and qualitative methods, is being increasingly used (Bryman, 2008: 22-3).

The very nature of the outputs of the Europeanization process considered here (i.e. institutional change, elite socialization and foreign policy conduct) point towards the use of qualitative data, despite the fact that the overall research strategy is deductive. The following paragraphs explain what type of methods and data this thesis chooses for the study of each individual outcome and why.

i) The first outcome of the Europeanization process approached in this thesis is institutional change of the foreign policy making. As previously highlighted, the scope of analysis is not strictly limited to the examination of the extent of change of the formal-legal institutional infrastructure; it aims to explain variation across countries due to the intervention of mediating variables, namely governmental politics and national identity politics. Therefore, the two research questions here ask:

a) What is the nature and extent of institutional change of the national foreign policy systems to the formal and/or informal requirements of participation in the EU foreign policy? and

b) Why does the institutional transformation in view of European integration reflect different patterns across the national systems of foreign policy in the three countries?

The examination of these two research questions involves a comparison across different stages of institutional transformation, at both the national and the European level. To a significant extent, this approach uses the building blocks of the historical institutionalism branch of neo-institutional theory. Historical institutionalism is interested in the role institutions play in the conflict between interests, ideas and power (Steinmo et al., 2001). Key for historical institutionalism is the impact that early institutional choices have over subsequent policy or political developments (Peters, 1998).

Historical institutionalism employs the technique of periodization, which divides the period of time under review into stages, comparing periods before and after the creation of an institution (Lecours, 2005: 15). There are two stages considered here: a) the Europe Agreements stage, covering the period from signing association agreements between the EU and CEE countries⁹ (1991/1993) until the opening of the accession talks (1997/1999),¹⁰ and b) the integration period, starting with the accession talks until the end of the year 2008. The empirical evidence suggests that the change of the institutional design might be easily associated with changes of governments or the political configuration of the governmental coalition rather than with the input originated at EU level. This is also true in

⁹ The Europe Agreement between the EC and Hungary was signed in 1991, came into force in 1994; however, its trade provisions entered into force in 1992, under an Interim Agreement. In the case of Romania, the Europe Agreement was signed in 1993, entering into force in 1995. The trade provisions entered into force earlier, in 1993, under an interim agreement. The Europe Agreement between the EC and Slovakia was signed in 1993, entering into force in February 1995. It should be noted that a previous agreement was signed with Czechoslovakia in 1991, which became outdated due to the disintegration of Czechoslovakia into two new states.

¹⁰ The European Council addressed the invitations for opening the accession talks in 1997 to Hungary and in 1999 to Romania and Slovakia.

the case of the inter-institutional competition, reflecting the role played by bureaucratic politics upon the way in which institutions are structured.

From the perspective of what type of methods are best suited to answering the research questions, the main choice is for qualitative data. The techniques of document analysis and in-depth interviewing are the main qualitative methods employed. A more detailed account of how this thesis employs these methods follows in the section dedicated to research methods (see this chapter pp. 82-7). The use of quantitative data, such as figures showing the increase in the number of staff of the Permanent Representation, or a specific unit within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is, to a certain extent, unavoidable; although it does not say anything about the reasons why the number of staff changed. Even in this case, the numbers are provided by qualitative primary sources, such as official documents or interviews, and not from a direct exercise of quantification. Furthermore, the study of formal institutions is often conducted from a legal-institutionalist perspective, paying particular attention to formal rules enshrined in fundamental laws and regulations. This is to say that the study of legal acts and regulations is a qualitative enterprise before anything else.

ii) The second outcome of Europeanization is elite socialization. The study of policy-making is but one indicator of the transformative influence of the EU (or the absence of it), and perhaps not even the most important. For some scholars, the study of the socialization effect of the EU and the extent of change of national, group or even individual identities is at least as, if not more, important. In most cases, the authors interested in the examination of Europeanization of foreign policy as socialization have especially used case study research designs and qualitative methods and data. In relative contrast, some authors interested in the relationship between international institutions and socialization use not

only the case study design, but also process tracking as the main method of data collection.¹¹ These studies use quantitative, such as longitudinal surveys, or qualitative methods, such as in-depth interviews. In some cases, in order to increase research reliability and internal validity, triangulation is used, combining primary and secondary sources, qualitative and quantitative data. Therefore, the study of international socialization could be approached from different methodological perspectives.

As recalled from the previous sections, one research question asks whether the experts from the Permanent Representations hold different views on the aims and means of EU foreign policy from those in the ministries of foreign affairs. Furthermore, the second question attempts to explore the intensity of the socialization process: is it limited to learning or does it go beyond that, affecting the profound self-identification of the subject. Therefore, the indicators used to assess the extent of socialization of national officials relate to:

a) the way policy-makers perceive and act according to the EU procedural norms and rules; and

b) the supranational versus intergovernmental preferences that policy-makers hold.

For the first indicator, the more positive the views on the EU norms and rules are, the more socialized the national official is. For the second indicator, the more a collective action at European level is preferred to an undertaking conducted mainly in national terms, the more socialized the national official is.

In other words, I need to compare the views of two distinct groups, one in Brussels, the other in the national capital. For this reason, the research method used to investigate the views expressed by the members of the two groups is the in-depth interview. Nevertheless,

¹¹ The process tracking is the research method examining the intervening causal process between the independent and dependent variables. In contrast with the statistical methods, it is more suited when the outcome to be explained is the result of multiple interactions characterizing the real world (see George, A. L., and A. Bennett. (2005).

there are considerable methodological difficulties associated with any attempt to examine an issue as elusive as the socialization of identities and interests using a single method. This thesis acknowledges the fact that the in-depth interview as the main method of data collection has its limits. The interviewees might not always like to disclose their deepest views on the matter. Bearing in mind the aim of the research questions on socialization, other research methods present inconvenience as well, such as survey or documentary analysis. Not only is the survey method problematic, as showed above, but the study of official documents also is. In fact, the latter source might be hardly expected to provide useful information at all to answer the question of, for instance, how a national representative perceives the working methods within the EU Council, or the understanding with regard to the exercise of power or compromise.

Hence, the need for triangulation as a way of increasing the validity and reliability of data. For instance, triangulation was also used by Alexandra Gheciu in a study about the socialization potential of NATO over Czech and Romanian decision-makers. In order to increase the validity of data she combined the use of in-depth interviews, participant observations of NATO courses and workshops and discourse analysis of official documents (see Gheciu, 2005: 984). This thesis makes use of a similar approach to triangulation, which is based on three alternative, yet complementary sources. One is participant observation. Most of the questions asked in this thesis arose during an internship at the Permanent Mission of Romania to the EU, which spanned the period November-December 2005.¹² This internship provided me with the chance to participate and observe the meetings of the Political and Security Committee (PSC, also known by its French acronym of COPS, which stands for *Comité politique et de sécurité*) and Political-Military Group (PMG), two formations of national representatives where matters of EU

¹² At that time, Romania has had the status of observer to the EU, pending the ratification by all member states of the Accession Treaty.

foreign, security and defence policy are debated. While inherently subjective, this alternative source of information is valuable since it offers me a way of checking the responses of interviewees against my own opinion and feelings as participant in these meetings.

The second source of information derives from the secondary literature. Even if the secondary literature I make use of is not directly related to the specific questions of this thesis, it helps in understanding and contextualizing the way in which national representatives from other new member states faced the challenge of adapting to a new environment, and what their experiences and feelings were.

The third alternative method to cross-examine the issue of socialization is related to political discourse in the form of speeches or interviews. On the one hand, it is not possible to compare the two target groups because the instances when the national ambassadors in Brussels make public statements during their mandate are actually rare. Therefore, only speeches, press conferences, and statements originating from the ministries of foreign affairs, prime minister, and president (in the case of Romania especially) can be examined. The argument is that the speeches on EU foreign policy related issues are elaborated within the departments dealing with EU foreign policy, therefore by people who are part of the target groups. The way they understand and view the cooperation within the EU framework, reflecting perhaps the extent to which they are socialized, might be reflected in the statements they produce. The assumption is that the official foreign policy speeches might be seen as a medium mirroring the extent to which national foreign policy-makers and decision-makers internalized European norms and rules, or the extent to which they are socialized. At the same time, the political discourse draws from the officially stated normative principles and values giving sense to and legitimizing the national foreign policy.

iii) The technique of periodization is used for the third output of the Europeanization process as well to compare and assess the extent of change across historical periods.¹³ The foreign policy priorities, goals, and means are written into official documents and expressed in the public discourse by high-level political actors. This fact points directly towards the use of qualitative sources of data. On the other hand, foreign policy analysis has a long-standing tradition of using quantitative techniques. The behaviouralist turn of the 1960s and 1970s, reflected for instance in the attempts to develop comparative studies of foreign policy across large number of countries or variables, is an illustrative example, although a commendable failure (Carlsnaes, 2002: 333). This is, again, one of the main problems associated with the use of statistical methods when the problem to be analysed requires a more interpretive approach.

The sub-case studies used in this thesis of the US-led war in Iraq, NATO's military intervention in Yugoslavia and Kosovo's declaration of independence require a close investigation of public statements and domestic political context surrounding it. The content of the official positions in the three countries with regard to these three critical events is examined. With regard to the first sub-case study, the timeframe covers mainly the period preceding the war and the immediate aftermath (between the summer of 2002 and until the end of 2003).

The timeframe for the next two sub-case studies covers the period 1999, after the adoption by the United Nations of resolution 1244, until Kosovo's Parliament declared unilateral independence from Serbia in February 2008, and the subsequent months when the members of the international community either recognized or rejected it. I contrast the content of official declarations of Hungary, Slovakia, and Romania during this period to

¹³ The same periodization used for the study of institutional change is employed for the study of the change of goals and means of foreign policy.

the EU positions and initiatives. The input of demands from the EU represents the need to agree a common European position on Kosovo declaration of independence as part of the aim commonly agreed by all EU member states that the EU should speak with a single voice on the world stage. However, the input of support for a common European position was very low in Romania and Slovakia, but greater in Hungary. The seventh chapter discusses at length the specific circumstances leading to these different decisions in each of the three countries analysed here (see chapter seven, pp. 213-30).

Based on the above, the research methods employed here allow for triangulation as a way to increase the validity and reliability of the data collected. The main sources of data used are official documents, in-depth interviews and media reports, supplemented by secondary sources. On the concrete use of each of these methods, further details are provided in the section on research methods. However, the next section outlines and justifies the option for the multiple-case study research design.

4.2. Research design

The foregoing sections have explained why this research strategy is deductive - and why it relies on qualitative methods and data. The decision of what sort of research design to use mainly derives from research strategy. Hence, opting for the multiple-case study is due partially to the fact that this design involves a comparison of few countries and the collection of qualitative data (see Bryman, 2008: 60).

Moreover, the interest in the topic was from the beginning of the research process a regional focus rather than a purely national one. While researching individual countries presents clear benefits, the usage of multiple cases has the advantage of providing more comprehensive evidence for answering the research questions (Herriot & Firesome, 1983, in Yin, 2003: 46). Besides, the use of multiple-case study research design is justified by the

fact that it helps to identify regular and understandable patterns and explanations of foreign policy (Kaarbo, 2002: 5).

In addition, this method is well suited for area studies research (Przeworski and Tenne, 1970 in Landman, 2000: 28). Finally, as illustrated in the literature review chapter, numerous analyses of Europeanization of foreign policy were focused on single countries (see for instance Agnantopoulos, 2008, Economides, 2005, Miskimmon, 2007, Pomorska, 2007, Rieker, 2006, Torreblanca, 2001, Tsardanidis and Stavridis, 2005, Wong, 2006). At the same time, it should be pointed out that most Europeanization studies (not only Europeanization of foreign policy) are case-studies (see Haverland, 2007: 66). Instead, a multiple case study approach is expected to provide a more solid basis for better understanding why similar Europeanization pressures cause different responses across candidate countries.

Therefore, the difficulties lay less in the need to compare than in what sample of countries to use and why. The final choice was also facilitated by the fact that my interest is in the new member states from CEE. On the one hand, I come from this region; therefore, I am personally more interested to understand the regional dynamic. On the other hand, the countries in CEE are less researched in contrast to the Western states, even if, it should be noted, this situation is changing rapidly.

This research design is inspired by John Stuart Mill's 'method of difference', in which the instances to be compared with one another must be exactly similar, in all circumstances with the exception of the one under investigation (Mill, 1851: 422). In other words, the three countries examined here are assumed to be as similar as possible with the exception of the outcome to be explained, namely the differentiated effect of Europeanization. For instance, their communist past, geographical location, efforts to reintegrate to the Western organizations are the similar features. In the current

terminology, this method is called the ‘most similar systems’ design, which brings together systems as similar as possible in as many features as possible with the exception of the outcome to be explained (Sartori, 1994: 22; Keman, 28: 72-76). The option for this model derives from the deductive strategy employed in this thesis. Allegedly, the countries from CEE are more similar to each other than to their Western counterparts in the EU. The features that are considered similar for comparative reasons are the former communist past, the process of democratic transformation and transition to market economy, the common geographical area they share and the common challenges due to the process of integration to the European Union.

In terms of case selection, both conceptual and practical reasons justify the final decision. The choice in favour of three case studies was made on the ground that it is logistically possible and theoretically more enriching than only one case. Some of the countries in the region are more researched than others. Poland, due to its size and influence, is perhaps an illustrative case of greater academic interest. For a start, the different integration records justify the selection of Hungary, Slovakia, and Romania as the three case studies of this thesis. Hungary was considered a frontrunner of integration process, invited in 1998, acceding in 2004. Slovakia’s invitation had been postponed in 1998, but the country was able to catch up with the Luxembourg Group¹⁴ and to join the EU in 2004. Romania, invited to join the EU in the second wave, alongside Slovakia, was not able or willing to become a full member before 2007. The assumption is that the cross-national variation in the accession paths may provide useful insights for explaining differences in the organization of national systems of foreign policy. Secondly, these

¹⁴ The Luxembourg Group is the informal name given to group of six candidate countries from Central and Eastern Europe and Mediterranean region (Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Poland, Slovenia and Cyprus), which were invited to open to accession talks at the Luxembourg European Council in December 1997. By contrast, the remaining applicant countries, the so-called Helsinki Group, were invited to open the negotiations at the Helsinki European Council in December 1999. The Helsinki Group consisted of Bulgaria, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Romania and the Slovak Republic.

countries have different kinds of political regimes. The type of executive – legislative relations has an impact on the organization of policy-making systems. Thirdly, all three are connected historically and geographically. The process of international socialization challenges the existing identities and interests of national officials, their conceptions of statehood, and relationships between national and supranational. Slovakia is a new state, emerging after the split of Czechoslovakia. Hungary, as part of the former Austro-Hungarian Empire, has an imperial past and suffered important losses of territories and people in favour of neighbouring countries, Romania and Slovakia among others. Therefore, a related reason for choosing the three countries has to do with the specific positions in the field of minorities. Both Romania and Slovakia have large Hungarian minorities, which are an issue of particular interest for Hungary. The question of minorities' rights has emerged frequently as a contending issue in foreign policy relations between Hungary, on the one hand, and Romania and Slovakia, on the other hand, and the issue was frequently raised at the European level.

One last word is required here about the way in which the three countries are ordered throughout this thesis. The option to start with Hungary, followed by Slovakia and concluding with Romania, is based on the integration record of the three countries, which was one of the main criterion for their selection. Hence, it makes more sense to organize the sequence in which they are approached based on the integration record criterion rather than other criteria (alphabetically for instance).

4.3. Methods and data collection

The main research methods for the collection of primary data are documentary analysis and in-depth interview. The documentary analysis refers to three categories of documents: a) official policy papers; b) media reports; and c) political discourse.

The first category covers a wide range of material originating at both state level and EU level. National documents include fundamental laws, governing programmes, laws and regulations concerning the organization of the core executive, policy strategies, white papers, annual review reports and so on. EU documents refer mainly to the European Commission's Opinions on the three applicant countries, the regular monitoring reports on their progress towards membership, relevant Conclusions of the General Affairs and External Relations Council (GAERC) and the European Council.

This type of document is limiting insofar as the political context is concerned. The web of circumstances and motives leading to a particular policy decision needs to be uncovered by using complementary sources of information. This is why the second type of documents relates to media sources, mainly newspapers articles and news agencies reports. Most media reports of interest for the area of concern of this thesis were issued throughout the previous almost two decades and hence are not easily available. However, the daily reports produced by the BBC Summary of World Broadcasts and national wire services and international press agencies, available via the Lexis Nexis database, compensate for the disadvantage of not having direct access to the original source of information.

The third category of documentary source for analysis is what may be generically coined 'political discourse'. In fact, this umbrella term covers a broad array of material, such as speeches addressed by foreign ministers to annual meetings of diplomats, speeches of prime ministers and presidents, official statements of spokespersons, press conferences or interviews. In general, the website pages of the institutions concerned provide a wealth of information, although sometimes the data are outdated and the access limited.

The preferred method for the study of documents is qualitative content analysis, which is based on searching for themes in the body-material analysed. In contrast to quantitative content analysis, which applies predefined categories to the material, the

qualitative analysis starts with some preliminary category, susceptible to later refinement and sensitive to the context in which the documents were generated (see Bryman, 2008: 529-31). Therefore, the study of official documents, mass-media reports and public speeches is conducted with the aim of collecting primary information on specific events and decisions and to clarify the context, especially the political context, in which these events were taking place. Secondary sources are also extremely helpful in understanding the domestic and external context surrounding an event. Secondary sources refer especially to reports and studies published by local research institutes. Only a few academic articles can be included in the category of secondary literature. However, I did request further clarification on the topics under investigation from the interviewees.

The other main research method used in this thesis is the interview. In contrast to the extreme forms of unstructured or structured interview, the option of this thesis is for semi-structured, in-depth interview, especially because I needed a flexible framework to allow the interviewees to communicate not only information and opinions, but to express their own feelings and ideas about the topics. This is particularly important in the case of socialization. As previously discussed, the interview is the major source of data collection, even if observation, secondary literature and speeches or interviews analysis are used as complementary methods in order to increase research validity and reliability. However, for the first and third outcomes of Europeanization, the interview is but one of the research methods, alongside documentary analysis and secondary sources.

A potential alternative to the interview would be the use of a longitudinal survey applied to a statistically representative sample of policy-makers from the three countries. However, even if the research option had been for a longitudinal survey, this would have not been a feasible option, on both conceptual and practical grounds. There is a trade-off between accuracy and understanding. The other side of the fact that the structured survey

provides for statistical accuracy is its weakness in terms of insights and comprehension of the context. There would also be difficulties from a practical point of view. Though theoretically possible, it is difficult to hope for full cooperation of institutions like ministries of foreign affairs in all three countries researched here. While more transparent and public relations oriented than a decade ago, these are still opaque and secretive institutions.

Consequently, the sampling of interviewees was performed with the aim of including people who are the most relevant to the research questions; this is to say people involved in policy-making process as senior officials or political leaders. A senior official, due to his experience and understanding of human relations, is usually more open to a fair discussion than a junior policy expert is. This is also true for political leaders, despite the fact that occasionally they might tend to express partisan views. The latter is perhaps more fearful, therefore sticking too much to the official position. Any in-depth interview in this case would miss the point.

Eventually, the sample of interviews consisted of: a) two individual interviews within each of the three Permanent Representations of Hungary, Slovakia and Romania to the EU; b) two-three interviews within each individual ministry of foreign affairs; c) one interview within the prime-minister's office, with the exception of Hungary; c) one to three interviews within the foreign affairs and European affairs committees of the national parliaments; d) one interview within the Romanian presidential administration only.

In addition, for background information and alternative insights into the topic, I conducted several other interviews with independent experts in research institutes or think tanks.¹⁵ Hence, I conducted 3 interviews with independent experts in Bratislava, at the Slovak Foreign Policy Association and Institute for Public Affairs (IPP, Slovak acronym

¹⁵ For a complete list of interviews, see Annex 1.

IVO, standing for Inštitút pre verejné otázky), and 2 interviews in Budapest, at the Hungarian Institute of International Affairs (HIIA, Hungarian acronym MKI for Magyar Külügyi Intézet). The length of the time spent in Slovakia and Hungary for research fieldwork was two and a half months, while in Romania it was only three weeks.

Since the interview method is used across all three outcomes of Europeanization (institutional change, elite socialization and foreign policy content), the guide of the interview is actually split up into three corresponding categories of issues-area.¹⁶ With few exceptions, most of the interviews were recorded. This approach is criticised on the ground that the interviewees might tend not to be as communicative as they would have been in the absence of the recording device. However, I consider that the advantages of recording the discussion overcome the minuses, notably the fact that the researcher may focus and think over what the interviewee is saying, instead of being concerned with taking notes. Besides, substantial information is lost during the note taking and difficult to recover from memory. From this point of view, it is much safer to record the interview. Most of the interviews were transcribed, the text introduced into computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software (i.e. NVivo). The analysis was conducted based on open coding and concept identification. During the analysis process, I was concerned with understanding the perception and meaning given by subjects to categories such as norms and values characterizing EU foreign policy, the importance of learning, the intergovernmental versus supranational, common European versus national interest and so on. With regard to quoting the interviewees throughout the thesis, I identified by name only those officials who explicitly agreed on being acknowledged as such; in all other instances, I only referred to the place and year of the interview, as a way of respecting the confidentiality requested by interviewees.

¹⁶ For the questions on which the structure of the in-depth interview was based, see Annex 2.

While the study of official documents and media reports did not cause significant difficulties, most of the materials being available and easily accessible online, the in-depth interview method of data collection created the need for research fieldwork abroad. Therefore, the stage of research included travels to Brussels, Budapest, Bucharest, and Bratislava. The fieldwork was undertaken during December 2007 in Brussels, April-June 2008 in Bratislava and Budapest, and October 2008 in Bucharest. There is an obvious time-gap between subsequent stages of fieldwork. However, the time-gap does not affect in any way the context to which the research questions of the thesis refer. As regards the issue of Kosovo, the possible problem rests on the fact that the discussions in Brussels, with diplomats at the three permanent representations, took place before the formal declaration of independence, while the trips to Bratislava, Budapest and Bucharest followed a few months after. However, the interview is not the only method to examine why the three countries responded differently against the background of searching for a common position at EU level. With the benefit of hindsight, I may add that the views of the experts in Brussels did not differ from those of the policy-makers in the capitals on this matter, even if they had been questioned before the formal declaration of independence.

4.4. Summary

This chapter linked the analytical framework to the methodology of this thesis. In the first section, it explained why a deductive research strategy was preferred. As detailed, it uses similar theoretical assumptions to those put forward in other studies of Europeanization of foreign policy, but targeting insufficiently researched cases. The aim is to test the empirical data against existing theoretical assumptions in order to refine and improve them and eventually to expand the research agenda itself. The multiple case studies research design is then discussed in the subsequent section, which provided the

arguments for the selection of Hungary, Slovakia and Romania as the three new member states examined in this thesis. Finally, the last section introduces the research methods of data collection, explaining why documentary analysis, in-depth interview and participant observation fit the aims of this research. The section critically commented on the limitations of these methods and on how triangulation is used in order to increase the validity and reliability of data. Besides, it described how the fieldwork in the four capitals was organized. The next three chapters present and discuss the empirical findings of this study.

CHAPTER 5

EUROPEANIZATION OF FOREIGN POLICY-MAKING

5.1. Introduction

The aim of this chapter is, first, to examine to what extent the national systems of foreign policy-making in Hungary, Slovakia and Romania were influenced and transformed by the process of European integration and, second, to explain why there is cross-country variation. To these aims, the chapter proceeds according to the historical-institutionalist approach previously discussed.

The structure of this chapter has both a chronological dimension and a functional one. On the one hand, it examines the successive historical stages corresponding to the advancement of the integration process from the early stage of signing the Europe Agreements until the end of the year 2008 (the cut-off date for the aim of this thesis). From the viewpoint of structure, this period is split into two chronological blocks:

- a) The Europe Agreement or the pre-accession stage (from 1991 in Hungary and 1993 in Slovakia and Romania until 1997 in Hungary and 1999 in Slovakia and Romania); and
- b) The integration or the accession and post-accession stage (from 1997 in Hungary and 1999 in Slovakia and Romania until 2008).

On the other hand, the chapter examines two functional issues throughout the two historical stages:

- a) The changing role of the MFA in the system of national coordination and the MFA's relationship with other institutional actors holding responsibilities in the field of European affairs; and

b) The changing structure and role of the Permanent Representations to the EU of Hungary, Slovakia, and Romania.

In other words, the first point examines the issue of management and coordination of European affairs and foreign policy at national level. The second points shift the focus of investigation from the domestic to the European level by examining the changing status and role of the permanent missions to permanent representations to the EU. According to the assumptions regarding the role of domestic factors, the influence of Europeanization is contrasted with the input coming from the governmental politics in the eventual design and functioning of the institutional framework of policy-making.

This chapter is introduced by a brief outline of the constitutional features underpinning the political systems in the three countries and concludes by summing up the arguments and empirical findings.

5.2. Initial legal-institutional choices

The study of transition processes in CEE emphasizes the importance of the initial conditions (i.e. different historical legacies, level of economic development, political-institutional traditions) as causes of the future trajectories of these countries. The three states examined here are good illustrations of this point; aspects connected with these initial conditions are examined throughout this thesis. Therefore, the current chapter starts by examining the early constitutional choices made in the three countries insofar as these choices had important consequences with regard to where political power lies, who are the main actors, and how they interact.

In Hungary, the process of political change began with the political contestation within the incumbent communist party after 1985 and especially during 1988-1989, opening the way for the emergence of the main political parties. Several political

organizations were created in opposition to the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party (MSZMP, Magyar Szocialista Munkáspárt). Among these, there were the Alliance of Free Democrats (SzDSz, Szabad Demokraták Szövetsége), the Hungarian Democratic Forum (MDF, Magyar Demokrata Fórum), the Alliance of Young Democrats (Fidesz, Fiatal Demokraták Szövetsége), and the historical Independent Smallholders Agrarian Workers and Civic Party (FKFPP, Független Kisgazda, Földmunkás és Polgári Párt). In October 1989, MSZMP was dissolved and recreated as the Hungarian Socialist Party (MSzP, Magyar Szocialista Párt) (see Bugajski, 2002: 341-9). These political parties were to play a major role in the setting up of the new constitutional foundation.¹⁷

The design of the post-communist Hungarian constitution and political regime was the result of the bargaining process among the communists and democratic opposition during the roundtable talks in 1989-1990. The eventual outcome, while a compromise, reflected the preferences of the democratic opposition. Accordingly, the amendments to the fundamental law endowed Hungary with a clear parliamentary political system, strong government, a strong and pro-active constitutional court able to check and balance the executive power, an indirectly elected and weak president, and high thresholds for political parties to enter the unicameral parliament. The result of these early constitutional choices was a political stage dominated by a few large political parties and stable majorities in the parliament. It also allowed Hungary to enjoy a higher level of governmental stability over the years in comparison with other CEE countries (Batory, 2008, Tismăneanu, 2000). Due to this legal-institutional political design, the major actor responsible for the external relations of the country is the executive. Formally, the activity of the executive is overseen by the legislature. However, since the prime minister is usually the head of the political

¹⁷ In fact, the new constitutional order is the result of the gradual amendments during the 1989-1990 period of the Constitutional law from 1949.

party holding the majority of seats in the parliament, the watchdog role of the legislature is practically diminished and the autonomy of the executive enhanced.¹⁸

In Slovakia, the initial constitutional choices were preceded by almost three years of constitutional negotiations between the two constituent republics of the Czechoslovak Federation (Stein, 1997: 45). The constitution of the new Slovak Republic favoured a parliamentary system, inspired by the Czecho-Slovak tradition (Stein, 1997: 49), and an indirectly elected president. The executive is also accountable to the unicameral legislature, which is elected through a proportional representation electoral system. However, different from Hungary, the presidential institution was granted stronger powers in relation to the prime minister, even if it is weaker in relation to the legislative power. The haste with which the constitution was drafted in 1992 created numerous ambiguous and contradictory provisions (Malovà and Haughton, 2002: 105), negatively affecting the policy-making process and straining the relationships between various branches of the government. For instance, the constitution provided that the head of state has the right to recall the prime minister and other members of the government;¹⁹ at the same time, it did not clearly specify what might happen in a situation where the president rejects a prime minister's request to dismiss a minister or ambassador (Malova, 1994: 416). Moreover, the fundamental law grants the head of state, and not the prime minister, the power to decide which member of the cabinet shall take over the management of a department in a situation

¹⁸ However, this constitutional design was not without negative consequences. With the benefit of hindsight, one may argue that one of the biggest problems of the strong role for the prime-minister within the executive and over the parliamentary majority is the phenomenon of 'state capture'. According to the World Bank, state capture is a form of corruption, manifested in the actions of individuals, groups, or firms both in the public and private sectors to influence the formation of laws, regulations, decrees, and other government policies to their own advantage as a result of the illicit and non-transparent provision of private benefits to public officials (Hellman and Kaufmann, 2001). The phenomenon of 'state-capture' was even more acute in Romania, given the pre-eminence of the unreformed and corrupt successor of the former communist party on the political scene until 1996 and even after (Vachudova, 2009: 45)

¹⁹ Art. 102 (f) of the Constitution of the Slovak Republic of 1992.

where the previous holder of that portfolio is recalled by the president.²⁰ The way in which the 1992 constitution defined the nature of the relationship between the prime minister and president was a source of serious political conflict between Vladimir Mečiar, the head of government (1992-1998),²¹ and Michal Kováč, the head of state (1993-1998). This led to a constitutional crisis in 1998, which was eventually overcome by amending the fundamental law by changing the system of electing the president and clarifying its powers (Malova and Rybář, 2008). Accordingly, since 1999, the president is directly elected in a two rounds ballot for a five-year renewable mandate.

The constitutional design of Romania, crafted in 1991, favoured an even stronger role for the presidential institution in relation to the government and the parliament. This choice reflects both the constitutional tradition of the country and the idiosyncratic nature of Romanian transition from totalitarianism to liberal democracy. If the constitutional models adopted in particular in Hungary and to a great extent in Slovakia were inspired by the post-war German parliamentary system, Romanian law-makers favoured the French presidential design, as provided by the constitution of the Fifth republic (Tănasescu, 2008). Unlike the strong dissident movements in Hungary or Poland in the 1980s, the by-product of violent dictatorial rule of Nicolae Ceaușescu was the absence of political contestation (Vachudova, 2005: 39-40). Hence, the new political force taking over the political power, following the uprising in December 1989 was not the debilitated democratic opposition, but the second echelon and dissidents from within the communist party, organized as a wide political platform called the National Salvation Front (FSN, Frontul Salvării Naționale) (see also Gallagher, 2009: 204).

²⁰ Art. 116 (7) of the Constitution of the Slovak Republic of 1992.

²¹ However, between March-December 1994, Mečiar was replaced as prime minister by Jozef Moravčík, due to a vote of no confidence in the Parliament.

The absence of a strong political contestation and opposition, coupled with a paternalistic type of civic culture of masses during the early 1990s, helped the leaders of the FSN, especially its leader, Ion Iliescu, to sponsor and eventually impose their own vision as regard the constitutional system (Gallagher, 2005, Gallagher, 2009, Gallagher and Andrievici, 2008, Tismăneanu, 1993). Accordingly, the constitution created a directly elected president with stronger powers than in any other former communist state (Gallagher, 2009: 18). The president was supposed to be apolitical and above party politics (Stan, 2002). In practice, this has never been the case (Tănăsescu, 2008). The president nominates the prime minister and dismisses the ministers at the recommendation of the premier. He may preside over cabinet meetings, dissolve the parliament, and appeal directly to the people, bypassing the legislature, in matters of national interest. The electoral system was based on proportional representation, requesting a minimum threshold of 3%.²² This system allowed numerous small parties to get access into the bicameral assembly and contributed to a fragmented and fluid political landscape, even though one dominated by the FSN and its successors,²³ at least until 1995.

The three countries discussed here made different initial constitutional choices due to specific circumstances. Therefore, the three political regimes cover a spectrum ranging from parliamentary to semi-presidential systems. As the remainder of this chapter

²² The electoral system was modified in order to raise the threshold to 5% for political parties and 8% for political alliances.

²³ FSN disintegrated in 1992. It resulted in a hard-line faction around Ion Iliescu and a reformist one around the Prime Minister Petre Roman, which became two of the dominant parties in Romanian politics in the years to come. The former faction was the Democratic National Salvation Front (FDSN, Frontul Democrat al Salvării Naționale), later renamed as the Party of Social Democracy in Romania (PDSR, Partidul Democrației Sociale în România). In 2001, as a result of mergers with other minor parties, it became what is today the Social Democratic Party (PSD, Partidul Social Democrat), the most important representative of the left. The faction of the Prime Minister Roman was renamed in 1993 as the Democratic Party (PD, Partidul Democrat) and kept this name until 2006 when, following the merger with a splinter faction of the Liberal Party (PL, Partidul Liberal), it became the Democratic Liberal Party (PDL, Partidul Democrat Liberal), a major centre-right political party.

demonstrates, the type of political regime left its mark on the structure and dynamic of the policy-making process.

5.3. The Europe Agreements (Pre-accession) stage

The first historical period examined here is the 'Europe agreements stage'. This phase mainly corresponds to the period preceding the negotiating and signing of the association agreements until the formal opening of the accession talks with the aspirant countries from CEE. The association agreements were also known as Europe Agreements in order to illustrate their importance and different status from normal agreements with third countries. Broadly speaking, at least during the early 1990s, the EC member states had tried to clarify what kind of future relations they wanted to have with the CEE countries. This is because at the end of the 1980s and beginning of the 1990s, the West European governments were undecided on how to deal with the post-communist countries knocking at the EC's door and unenthusiastic about the prospect of enlarging the EC/EU (see Mayhew, 1998: 11). Hence, the EAs were seen from two different, contrasting perspectives: as stepping-stones towards full membership by the CEE countries; conversely, some Western European governments, like France for instance, conceived the EAs only as a long-term alternative solution to enlargement (Smith, 1999: 91)

On the other side, even if some of the CEE countries plainly expressed the strategic objective of joining the EC, others were more ambivalent. The rhetoric of the 'return to Europe', dominating the official discourse in CEE countries, hid different political realities and expectations. Countries like Hungary and Poland, starting the transition to liberal democracy and free market earlier than other states in the former Soviet bloc, hoped to become members of the EC as early as possible. Instead, for countries like Romania, given

the violent break with the totalitarian past,²⁴ the main priorities were inwardly oriented towards the consolidation of the new political regime.

The difference is visible for instance with regard to the position towards the European Community. Hungary's new prime-minister, József Antall, stated after winning the first democratic elections in Hungary, in March-April 1990, that the objective of his country was to become part of the EC/EU by the year 1995.²⁵ Instead, Ion Iliescu, the FSN's leader in Romania had made less bold claims on this matter than Antall, aiming only at strengthening ties with the Common Market.²⁶

Even if the EC had first established contractual relations with Romania as early as in 1974,²⁷ the communist authorities saw how a trade and economic cooperation agreement, under negotiation in 1987, had stalled since then due to the appalling human rights record of the Ceaușescu regime.²⁸ Accordingly, in 1990 the post-communist government in Romania inherited a frozen relationship with the EC. Hence, formal contractual relations between Romania and EC were re-established almost two years later than in Hungary and Czechoslovakia, which secured formal contractual relations in 1988, by signing trade agreements. Furthermore, when the European Council in Dublin, in April 1990, tabled the idea of association agreements with the former communist states, the first CEE countries to conclude these agreements were Poland, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia, in December 1991, while Romania signed the agreement only in February 1993.

²⁴ However, even if Romania was the only post-communist country where the revolution was so violent and bloody, numerous authors consider that, in reality there was no definitive divorce with the past in Romania. The nature of post-communist politics in Romania was considered as 'illiberal' (Vachudova, 2005: 37-61), 'liberal authoritarian' (Fischer, 1992: 47) or 'crypto communist' (Tismăneanu and Kligman, 2001), given the fact that the political arena was dominated by ex-communists playing the ethno-nationalist card.

²⁵ The Guardian, July 18, 1990. 'Hungary to join West 'within decade''. Later on, Antall did accept that the accession could not be attained before 1997-8 (MTI Econews, July 29, 1991).

²⁶ BBC, April 30, 1990, EE/0751/B/1, 'PNUC President on Foreign Policy.'

²⁷ In 1974, the EC and Romania concluded a Generalised System of Preferences Agreement, followed in 1980 by an Agreement on Industrial Products. At the time, Romania was perceived by the West as pursuing a more independent policy from Moscow.

²⁸ The Associated Press, January 5, 1990, 'EC Seeks Improved Ties With Romania.'

In the Czech and Slovak Federal Republic, the aim of EC membership was clearly expressed, even if acknowledging that its achievement was unlikely in the near future.²⁹ In the Slovak Republic of the Federation, while the objective of EC membership was also clearly assumed, the way to achieve it was seen through the lenses of the ongoing debate about the constitutional settlement between the two republics. The Slovak preference for a confederative type of constitutional arrangement, with strong republics and weak federal structures, also implied a request for stronger foreign policy competencies at the level of republics (Kopecky and Učeň, 2003: 165). The association agreement was seen through this prism. Accordingly, the Slovak government asked for the insertion in the preamble of the Europe Agreement of the provision that the implementation of the agreement was to be carried out by the two republics. The justification put forward in this case was that insofar as 80% of the provisions of the agreements are to be implemented by the republics, it makes sense to transfer to them supplementary powers.³⁰ The real reason for the Slovak authorities was, however, the desire to devolve further responsibilities in the area of foreign policy from the federal government to the governments of the two constituent republics.³¹ The overall aim was to enhance the position of the Slovaks in relation to the Czechs within the Federation.

The EAs aimed to provide for an appropriate framework of political dialogue, the gradual establishment of a free trade area, including the expansion of trade and economic relations, and the setting up of new rules, policies and practices as the basis for integration into the Community³² (for a detailed examination of the provisions of the Europe

²⁹ The Associated Press, March 2, 1990, 'Czechoslovakia Would Like to Join EC.'

³⁰ BBC Summary of World Broadcasts, November 5, 1991, EE/1221/B/1, 'Slovak Premier on Constitutional Talks; Budget: EC. Negotiations.'

³¹ BBC Summary of World Broadcasts, October 28, 1991, EE/1214/B/1, 'Federal government discusses association agreements with EC.'

³² Europe Agreement establishing an association between the European Communities and Hungary, including Exchanges of Letters with Declarations and final act (Brussels 1991).

agreements, see Mayhew, 1998). While the backbone of the agreements consisted of economic provisions, the political significance stands out as well. On the one hand, the agreements laid down the legal framework towards greater political convergence in all fields of EU competence (Rupp, 1999: 90). On the other hand, the agreements made clear references to the objective of integration into the EC, endorsing the aspirations of CEE countries. The negotiation of the EA also provided the first negative experience for the CEE officials involved in discussions with the EC's representatives. The way in which the negotiations were conducted plainly demonstrated that the Western members of the EC were not keen to compromise on their trade interests in order to help the fragile economies of their Eastern partners (Mayhew, 1998). The asymmetry of power relationship between the two sides (Western versus CEE governments) was reinforced by the fact that the latter perceived the membership as being in the direct interest of their countries, while the former were lukewarm about the prospect of enlargement (Mayhew, 1998: 10). A decade later, during the negotiations for membership, the asymmetry of power was felt again (see also this chapter p. 113). This experience had an important impact on the elite socialization process as well. The next chapter examines in more detail the extent to which the perception of power asymmetry shaped the attitudes of the representatives from the new member states with regard to the EU culture of cooperation and compromise.

The legal-institutional framework of the Europe Agreements with regard to political and technical dialogue between the EC and the associate countries stipulated the creation of three categories of institutions of association, namely the Council, Committee and Joint Parliamentary Committee, as well as a mechanism of dispute resolution. The setting up of these instruments in the associate countries was a straightforward process. However, more difficult was to decide on the question of which domestic institutional actor ought to be in charge of coordinating the European affairs of the country.

The coordination and management of European integration was and continues to be a challenging task affecting other member states as well. For instance, during the early years of negotiating the United Kingdom accession to the European Community, the role of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) was briefly threatened by the creation of the position of a cabinet minister with EC responsibilities. This position was abolished after accession in 1974 and since then, the FCO occupied central stage, although sharing responsibilities with the European Secretariat of the Cabinet Office (see Allen, 2005: 258-9). Instead, a completely different picture characterizes the French system of coordination. The key player in the coordination mechanism is centred on the General-Secretariat for European Affairs attached to the Prime Minister's Office. Yet, the Common Foreign and Security Policy is still the exclusive competence of the MFA (Morrisse-Schilbach, 2005: 115-21).

Even if the coordination arrangements in the UK and France are distinct, what they have in common is the centralised bureaucratic style of public administration. Instead, in federal countries like Germany or Austria, or a quasi-federal state like Spain, different arrangements suits better the more fragmented and pluralistic patterns of policy-making. In fact, a review of the existing arrangements across the member states would illustrate the diversity of models adopted by different countries in order to fit both domestic circumstances and the demands of Europeanization. While is not the aim of this thesis to engage in such an enterprise, it is worth highlighting the fact that Europeanization affects all member states, both founding members and newly joined countries, and even non-members dealing with the EU. The objective of this thesis is limited to examining the responses to Europeanization of the three new member states from CEE.

Given the fact that the relations between the CEE countries and the EC did fall, at least in the initial phases, within the scope of foreign policy, the actor best placed to be in

charge of coordinating and managing this matter should have been the MFA. However, empirical evidences from the three countries demonstrate that this was not always the case. There are important differences across countries as regard when and to what extent the role of the MFA increases in relation to other institutional actors. For instance, while the role of the Hungarian MFA grew more powerful after 1996, the management of European affairs in Romania was mainly centred on the Prime Minister's Office. In Slovakia, to a certain extent similar to Hungary, the limited expertise of the newly created MFA did not allow it to play the key role during the negotiation of the EA; however, its position became stronger in the subsequent years of this first stage.

i) Hungary (1990-1998)

In Hungary, the fact that the MFA did not play the main role until 1996 is because European affairs and relations with the EC were seen from the perspective of the economic component of the association agreement. Vida (2002: 59) contends that, until 1996, the system of coordination of European affairs was two-centred, the responsibilities being split between the Ministry of Industry and Trade (MIT) and the MFA.

However, this division overlooks another important actor, which was the Ministry of International Economic Relations (MIER), competing with both the MIT and MFA. In fact, when the Office of European Affairs was created in 1990 by the then Prime Minister József Antall, its location was established within the MIER and not MFA or MIT,³³ mainly because the economic diplomacy was the responsibility of the MIER. At the same time, the expertise for dealing with the trade related aspects of the EA was concentrated in the MIT. Besides, when the coordinating Inter-ministerial Committee for the implementation of the EA was created in April 1992, it was endowed with a bicephalous

³³ MTI Econews, March 24, 1995, 'New head of Office of European Affairs appointed.'

leadership structure. The Committee was co-chaired. One chairperson was Endre Juhasz, the Head of the Office of European Affairs of the MIER and future ambassador to the EU. The other chairperson was Sándor Peisch, Deputy Secretary of State and Head of the Europe Department in the Foreign Ministry.³⁴

This arrangement created an undesired tension in the coordination system between the three ministries, and especially between the MIER and MIT. At the same time, the decision to remove the source of tension and to streamline the coordination system was not originated by any request of the EC/EU. In fact, the resolution of this matter was the outcome of the change of governing coalition following the parliamentary elections in 1994. The MIER, including the Office of European Affairs was integrated into the structure of the MIT in the summer of 1994. The context in which this decision was adopted fully demonstrates the importance of governing coalition politics in shaping the institutional framework of coordinating European affairs (see below).

The two rounds election in May 1994 marked the return to power of the socialists in Hungary, alongside the free democrats. The two component political parties were the MSzP, with 209 seats in Parliament (54%) and the SzDSz, with 69 seats (17%). Together, the two parties secured no fewer than two-thirds of the seats in the new Parliament. The decision to integrate the MIER, including the Office of European Affairs, into the structure of the MIT was part of the coalition agreement.³⁵ Apparently, the decision aimed to rationalize the activity of the cabinet and to reduce the number of ministries from 13 to 12.³⁶ However, downsizing the number of ministries suited well the algorithm of distributing the ministerial portfolio, with eight ministries for Socialists and four for the Free Democrats. At the same time, even the outgoing political state secretary in the MIER,

³⁴ MTI Econews, April 10, 1992, 'EC association agreement - inter-ministerial committee.'

³⁵ BBC Summary of World Broadcasts, July 29, 1994, 'new appointments; Foreign minister on personnel changes, Slovak draft of treaty.'

³⁶ MTI Econews, July 5, 1994, 'Parliament Winds Up International Economic Relations Ministry.'

Laszlo Bogar, agreed that the ministry was a source of dispute from the outset and its abolition was not an error.³⁷ Therefore, if between 1990 and 1994 there were three ministries dealing with European affairs, between 1994 and 1996, the two remaining competing institutional actors in this field were the MFA and MIT.

The role of the MFA was challenged again in 1996 when the European Commission sent to the Hungarian government the technically demanding questionnaire for assessing the readiness of the applicant country. The answers to the 167 pages of the questionnaire were supposed to provide, in three months, a comprehensive report on the political and economic situation in Hungary. Budapest's application to EU membership was submitted on 31st March 1994 and assessed by the European Commission. Based on the answers to the questionnaire, the European Commission elaborated the opinion on Hungary's application for membership to the EU, which recommended the opening of accession talks with Budapest (Commission, 1997a). However, during the process of answering the questions, a serious concern emerged with regard to the ability and skills of the MFA's staff, '*used to the Cold War's generalities*', to understand and answer the technical questions sent by the European Commission (interview, Péter Balázs, Budapest, 2008).

Against this background, the system of coordination and management of European affairs was reviewed and adjusted. In this case, Europeanization, or the demands originating at the EU level and expressed as a technical document (the questionnaire), was the source of domestic institutional change. It became clear that the fragmentation and inter-institutional competition between the MFA and MIT had a negative influence on the management of European affairs. The solution adopted by the socialist Prime Minister Gyula Horn was to transfer the entire office of European affairs from the MIT to the MFA (interview, Péter Balázs, Budapest, 2008; see also Ágh and Rózsás, 2003, Vida, 2002). The

³⁷ BBC Summary of World Broadcasts, July 1, 1994, 'Parliamentary and Government Affairs; Parliamentary committee supports move to amalgamate ministries.'

professional background of Gyula Horn, who used to be a senior official in the MFA during the communist regime and a foreign minister in the last communist government of Miklós Németh (Lomax, 1995: 88), should be recalled here. Accordingly, the professional background of the prime minister might provide a partial explanation for this decision.

This move provisionally closed a cycle whereby the Office of European Affairs had an uncertain institutional status, being first established as part of MIER, transferred to MIT and eventually integrated to the MFA. After formal accession in April 2004, however, the coordination was to become again a source of inter-institutional rivalry, the Office of European Affairs being moved away from the MFA, to the Office of the Prime Minister this time (see also this chapter, pp. 117-8)

The result of the decision to unify the diplomatic and sectoral specialisation enhanced the required expertise of the MFA, streamlined the coordination process and ensured a higher degree of synergy (Vida, 2002: 59). At the same time, the Horn government set up the European Integration Cabinet in February 1996, and the Strategic Task Force on Integration. The Cabinet of European Integration, headed by the prime minister and consisting of the ministers of foreign affairs, interior, justice, economy and finance ought to be the main decision-making body on European integration. The Strategic Task Force, set up within the prime minister's office, was composed of 18 working groups with the aim of advising the Integration Cabinet (Ágh, 1999: 843).

Furthermore, the role of the MFA was further strengthened when the Government decided to create in April 1996, the State Secretariat for European Integration within the MFA. The main responsibility of the new body was to deal with all matters related to the accession process³⁸ (European Commission, 1997a). Therefore, the MFA emerged from

³⁸ MTI Econews, April 5, 1996, 'Santer and Kovacs Meet for Working Breakfast.'

the inter-ministerial competition in Hungary during the EA stage as the most important institutional actor on European affairs (see also Rupp, 1999: 98).

ii) Slovakia (1993-1999)

In the Slovak Republic, the management and coordination of European affairs is closely linked to the overall process of setting up a new political system and new institutions and mechanisms of foreign policy making. The main challenge in this enterprise was the absence of a tradition of statehood in Slovakia, including in conducting foreign policy which is a fundamental attribute of any sovereign state (Duleba et al., 1998: 11). What Slovakia had to do, different from Hungary or Romania in this case, was to invent the institutions and processes of foreign policy (see also Haughton, 2005: 3).

Although a Ministry of International Relations (MIR) was created in the Slovak republic as early as 1990, its functions were mostly related to developing external cultural links and cooperation with other state's regions, but not with national governments themselves. The powers and role of the MIR were limited by the constitution. The federal constitution provided that only the MFA, as part of the federal government, shall represent the state in international relations (Bátora, 2003: 271, Duleba, et al., 1998). As Bátora (2003: 272) explains, despite the fact that the new Ministry of Foreign Affairs was built on the existing structure of the MIR, the source of inspiration came from the way in which the federal Czechoslovak MFA had been organized. In logistical terms, Slovakia also inherited from the defunct federation, on a proportional basis with the Czech Republic, a series of properties abroad, which allowed the opening of diplomatic missions in 53 states and 4 permanent missions to international organizations (Duleba, et al., 1998: 12).

The new staff of the MFA increased rapidly during its first year of existence, from the initial 40 employees of the MIR, most of them lacking diplomatic experience, to

around 400 (plus 350 diplomats posted abroad) at the end of 1993. Many were hired hastily and without too much attention being paid to their professional skills and abilities (Bátora, 2003: 271-2). While some of these new staff came from the federal MFA, some other Slovak diplomats chose to carry on their activity in the newly established Czech MFA (Haughton, 2005: 3), for personal circumstances or since they were rejected in Bratislava, being seen as not loyal to the newly formed Slovak state (Duleba, et al., 1998: 14).

Besides, the endeavours to build the new political and administrative institutions in the first year of Slovakia as an independent state were undermined by political instability and fragmentation of the ruling political parties, namely HZDS and SNS³⁹ (Malová, 1994: 417). For instance, during 1993-4, no fewer than four political leaders alternated at the MFA's helm. The first foreign minister, Milan Kňažko, was dismissed as a consequence of the political struggle inside the HZDS, and replaced with Jozef Moravčík, the former foreign affairs minister of Czechoslovakia and future prime minister of Slovakia between March and October 1994 (see Malová, 1995). Following Moravčík's taking over as premier, the new foreign affairs minister Eduard Kukan, a career diplomat, was appointed. Kukan's mandate was short lived, even if he remain foreign minister a few more weeks after the parliamentary elections held in the autumn of 1994 due to the length of the post-election process of coalition formation. With the formation of a new cabinet, the new foreign minister became Juraj Schenk, a member of the HZDS.

It was not only the political instability that affected the functioning of institutions and policy-making, but also the nature of nationalistic political game and anti-democratic practices pursued by Vladimir Mečiar, the prime minister between 1993-1998 (with the

³⁹ During 1993-1998, Slovakia was governed by a coalition led by the Movement for a Democratic Slovakia (HZDS, Hnutie za demokratické Slovensko), the far-right nationalist Slovak National Party (SNS, Slovenská národná strana) and the Association of Workers in Slovakia (ZRS, Združenie robotníkov Slovenska), a populist radical left oriented political movement.

exception of the period between March and October 1994). These practices prompted numerous observers of CEE politics to include Slovakia in the group of illiberal, authoritarian states, alongside Romania and Bulgaria (Vachudova, 2005). Moreover, the political relations between Slovakia and the EU became strained, leading eventually to the non-invitation of Slovakia to the opening of the accession talks for full membership along the other three members of the Visegrad Group.

The inherent problems of a new beginning prevented the MFA from playing a key role in the management and coordination of European affairs. For instance, the team involved in the negotiation of the new association agreement with the EC,⁴⁰ during the spring and summer of 1993, was not led by the MFA's representative, but by Peter Mihok, chairman of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry. The MFA's representative was simply a member of the team, alongside other officials from the ministries of economy, agriculture, finance, as well as the customs authority.⁴¹ Despite the international dimension of the agreement under negotiation, the role of the MFA was not different from that of any other sectoral ministry or state agency involved in talks. In contrast with Hungary, where the role of the MFA was challenged by other ministries, but relatively similar to Romania, where the coordination was centred on the prime-minister's office, in Slovakia the challenger was the governmental office itself as a centre of coordination. After the signing of the association agreement, a Council for the implementation of the EA, led by Jozef Kalman, deputy prime minister, was created within the government. The aim of the new

⁴⁰ Following the division of Czechoslovakia, the two successor republics had to negotiate new association agreements with the European Community.

⁴¹ CTK National News Wire, April 14, 1993, 'Slovak Delegation to discuss association accord with EC Thursday.'

organization was to monitor the way in which the agreement's provisions are implemented⁴² and to draft the strategy for Slovakia's European integration.⁴³

To a certain extent, the position of the MFA in the national system of management and coordination of European affairs changed after the legislative elections in September 1998, when the populist-nationalist coalition led by Vladimir Mečiar was replaced with a new cabinet, having Mikuláš Dzurinda, the chairman of the Slovak Democratic Coalition (SDK, Slovenská demokratická koalícia)⁴⁴ as the prime minister. The new government, while based on a 'coalition of coalitions', consisting of ten political parties⁴⁵ (also, see Harris, 2004: 190), was united by the desire to get Slovakia out of the international isolation brought in by the political practices of the previous government. The aim of catching up with the other three countries of the Visegrad Group and joining NATO and the EU constituted important incentives for overcoming the political heterogeneity of the governmental coalition. Besides the political will to repair the damaged international reputation of Slovakia, emphasis was also placed on strengthening of the institutional capacity to deliver the electoral promises and to reach political objectives.

iii) Romania (1990-1999)

In Romania, the EA stage lasted until the opening of the accession talks for membership in December 1999. Different from Hungary, the role of the MFA during this

⁴² BBC Summary of World Broadcasts, June 24, 1994, 'Coordination centre for the implementation of the European Agreement set up'.

⁴³ BBC Summary of World Broadcasts, March 16, 1995, 'Foreign minister on foreign policy, Slovak-Hungarian basic treaty.'

⁴⁴ SDK was a coalition of five political parties, namely Democratic Union (DU, Demokratická únia), Christian Democratic Movement (KDH, Kresťanskodemokratické hnutie), Democratic Party (DS, Demokratická strana), Social Democratic Party of Slovakia (SDSS, Sociálnodemokratická strana Slovenska) and Green Party in Slovakia (SZS, Strana zelených na Slovensku).

⁴⁵ Besides the SDK, the new cabinet included representatives of the other parties previously in the opposition, namely the Party of the Democratic Left (SDL', Strana demokratickej ľavice), the Party of Hungarian Coalition (SMK, Strana maďarskej koalície or in Hungarian MKP, Magyar Koalíció Pártja), and the Party of Civil Understanding (SOP, Strana občianskeho porozumenia).

period remained limited to diplomatic and political aspects related to European affairs. All aspects linked to the EU first pillar policies were dealt with by a department established in 1992 within the Prime Minister's Office. The organizational set-up of the MFA in 1992 did not reveal a special interest in European integration, EC related issues not being dealt with by any dedicated unit; instead, this was part of the job of a directorate responsible for relations with CEE, EFTA, and NATO countries.⁴⁶ A dedicated department for European affairs was established only in 1994.⁴⁷

At this stage, relations between Romania and the EC were mainly limited to the implementation of the trade and cooperation agreement, signed in October 1990, in effect since May 1991. The trade agreement was important both in terms of its economic consequences and since it represented the end of the isolation of Romania in Europe, due to the political unrest in Bucharest during the first half of 1990 and the suspicions with regard to the democratic credentials of the new government.⁴⁸ However, in May 1991, at the time when the negotiations between the EC and Visegrad countries were well underway to signing the EAs, Romanian authorities were only in a position to submit the official application for opening the negotiation talks. Eventually, the talks started in the summer of 1992 and were finalized in February 1993 when the EA was signed.

There is evidence of the limited role of the MFA even at this early stage. Since the formal contacts between Romania and the European Community during the 1970s and 1980s were commercial relations, at the beginning of 1990s the negotiation of EA was seen in a similar way, as talks on a commercial agreement (interview, Vasile Pușcaș, Cluj-Napoca 2008). Therefore, the team of negotiators was represented by a state secretary in the Ministry of Trade, and not by the MFA.

⁴⁶ Governmental Decree No. 814/1992.

⁴⁷ Governmental Decree No. 479/1994.

⁴⁸ European Report, October 24, 1990, 'EEC/Romania: Final Signing of Cooperation Agreement Ends Political Saga.'

The Romanian context was similar from this point of view to the Hungarian one; in both cases, the EC/EU affairs were dealt with by the economic and commercial branches of the government rather than by the Foreign Service. In both cases, the European affairs were mainly perceived at this early stage as trade relations, reflecting the experience of communist administration dealings with the EC before 1989 (mainly in commercial terms) (interviews, Vasile Pușcaș, Cluj-Napoca, 2008 and Péter Balázs, Budapest, 2008). This perception was the basis of a long-term inter-institutional rivalry, challenging the role of the MFA in both countries. However, as this chapter illustrates, the eventual outcome turned out to be different with regard to which institutional actor would play the major role in coordinating European affairs.

Nevertheless, there was a positive side to the fact that Romania started the talks after the Visegrad countries. As Mayhew argues, the negotiations talks with Romania (and Bulgaria) were concluded very rapidly. On the one hand, Romanian officials were willing to conclude the agreement as soon as possible. On the other hand, there was little space to depart from the existing template negotiated with the Visegrad states (Mayhew, 1998: 24). Nonetheless, the speed came at a cost. The main strategy of the small and inexperienced team of Romanian negotiators was to show flexibility during the six rounds of talks in order to conclude the negotiations as soon as possible and to claim a political success, even if this was not the most effective cost-benefit deal (Papadimitriou and Phinnemore, 2008: 27). Besides, in contrast to the texts of the previous EAs, the agreement included for the first time provisions on the respect of human rights, democratic principles and market economy as mandatory requirements (Smith, 1999: 97). It should be noticed that these new provisions were received with consternation by the Czech and Slovak negotiators when they started discussing the new agreements as independent states; there was no such a provision in the EA signed by Czechoslovakia in 1991.

In spite of these inauspicious circumstances, the entry into force of the Europe Agreement in February 1995 was hailed as a '*historic date, like a turning point*' and a '*victory for the country*'.⁴⁹ It paved the way for the negotiation of a broad national strategy across political parties, trade unions, non-governmental organizations, academics, and economists around a national strategy to prepare the integration into the EU and for submitting the official application for membership on the 22nd June 1995.

Soon after the entry into force of the EA, the Romanian government adopted two decrees, one enhancing the role of the Department of European Integration (DEI) of the Government as the main agent responsible for the European integration of Romania, the other creating the Inter-ministerial Committee for European Integration (ICEI). In both cases, the prime minister stood in a position of power due to the direct control over the process of coordination and management of European integration. The ICEI, in which all ministries and relevant state agencies are represented at high political level, is chaired by the prime-minster. Besides, the head of the DEI, with the rank of state secretary, is the executive president of the Committee, being also directly subordinated to the prime minister. According to this arrangement, the prime minister has a direct control both over the process of inter-ministerial coordination and the day-to-day management of European integration.

Apparently, this arrangement might have had the potential to stir up tensions between the prime minister and president, given the formal, wide political powers conferred on the head of state by the Constitution. In the case of Romania, the semi-presidential constitutional design creates a different context from the parliamentary regimes in Hungary and Slovakia. If in the latter cases, the struggle for inter-institutional power lay within the cabinet, in the former case it also added the presidency as a key actor

⁴⁹ BBC Summary of World Broadcasts, February 3, 1995, 'President hails the coming into force of EU Association Agreement'.

competing in the exercise and control of the executive power. In Romania, the special, personal relations between the prime minister, Nicolae Văcăroiu, and president Ion Iliescu might explain why there was, in fact, no tension and the arrangement worked for both sides. A reason for this situation is the political support granted by the president to the premier between 1992 and 1996. The technocratic premier was highly dependent on the political backup of the president in order to deal with the political parties in the Parliament (see Verheijen, 1999: 207).

At the same time, this arrangement was convenient for the president since it provided him with a convenient way to oversee the developments in the management and coordination of European integration without being directly involved. Moreover, the arrangement was maintained even after the general elections in 1996, bringing to power a coalition of centre-right opposition parties⁵⁰ and a new president, Emil Constantinescu.⁵¹ The DEI of the Government was kept in place and strengthened by the appointment of a minister delegate at its helm instead of the previous state secretary. The reason for this change was the need to provide the head of the DEI with more political clout in relations to other fellow ministers in the cabinet (interview, Bucharest, 2008). However, as will be showed later, following the decision adopted by the European Council in December 1999 to open the accession talks with Romania, as well as five other aspiring countries, including Slovakia, further changes in the management and coordination of European affairs were deemed necessary.

⁵⁰ The governing coalition was formed around the Romanian Democratic Convention (CDR, Convenția Democrată Română) an alliance of political parties motivated by their desire to create a united front against PDSR. The most important members of the CDR were the Christian-Democratic National Peasants' Party (PNȚCD, Partidul Național Țărănesc Creștin Democrat) and National Liberal Party (PNL, Partidul Național Liberal). The governing coalition also included PD and the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania (UDMR, Uniunea Democrată Maghiară din România or RMDSz, Romániai Magyar Demokrata Szövetség in Hungarian).

⁵¹ Emil Constantinescu was the presidential candidate of the CDR at the presidential elections in 1996.

5.4. The integration stage

The beginning of the accession talks with Hungary in March 1998, and Slovakia and Romania in early 2000 increased dramatically the visibility of European integration for the public opinion and transformed the previously remote prospect of integration into an almost tangible reality. At an institutional level, the opening of the accession talks intensified the political and technical dialogue between the representatives of the European Commission and national delegations and required further political-administrative adjustments.

From a formal point of view, the institutional framework whereby the bilateral dialogue and negotiations took place was that created by the EA, consisting of the association councils, association committees, and joint parliamentary assemblies. What changed was the design of coordinating European integration within the acceding countries. It is true that institutional changes were also introduced in the previous years. In a sense, the EA stage was an exploratory period, wherein the governments were trying to understand how to deal with the EC and what were the best mechanisms towards this goal. As the previous section illustrated, at the end of the EA stage the most important institutional actor responsible of coordinating European affairs in Hungary turned out to be the MFA. In Slovakia, the role of the MFA became more salient, yet without taking over the role of the office of the government. In Romania, the Office of the Prime Minister was the most important actor throughout this period.

However, in view of the opening of the accession talks, further changes were deemed necessary. There was no formal requirement coming from the European Commission that a position of chief negotiator has to be created; yet, all candidate countries set up one (Slovakia and Romania) or linked the functions of negotiation with a pre-existing role (Hungary). Nevertheless, this does not mean that there was no formal demand at all.

Contrary, the Europeanization pressures were felt with regard to what was defined by the European Commission as appropriate administrative capacity, which was also reflected in the field of the CFSP. The regular reports of the Commissions might be seen, in this sense, not only as technical factsheets on the state of candidates' preparedness, but also as normative demands prescribing the right course of action.

The concrete experience of accession talks demonstrated that, in fact, the idea of negotiation itself is misleading insofar as the power asymmetry between the two sides was so disproportionate (see also this chapter, p. 98). As András Inotai remarked, the gross imbalance between the 'policy-maker' (the EU) and the 'policy-taker' (the candidate country) was augmented by the fact that the EU is one of the major economic players in the world while the candidate countries participated in the discussions individually (Inotai, 2001: 16-17). Hence, there was not a great deal to be negotiated, with the exception of some transitional periods on a case-by-case basis. The EU legislation, the *acquis communautaire*, had to be taken on as such and implemented into national legislation. In a way, the power nature of the accession talks recalled the sour experience of negotiating the EA in the early 1990s and shaped the perceptions of those national representatives involved that there is an inherent dose of unfairness in the negotiation process. Even at the time when the negotiation talks were conducted, the unfairness of the power distribution was observed and considered a potential danger for the post-enlargement functioning of the EU. As Karen Smith remarked, the norms of reciprocity and mutual trust between the old and new member states, which represent the lubricant of the integration process, could be more difficult to built if the candidate countries resent the unfairness of the accession talks (Smith, 2003: 120).

At the same time, the accession talks made clear that the European integration is as much a matter of external policy as it is about wide and deep internal political, economic,

and social transformation. European integration was no longer a matter of foreign policy alone, but a national strategic objective involving all central and local public administration and state agencies. Foreign policy itself became only one ‘chapter’ among no less than thirty-one, all of them making up the *acquis communautaire*. The national foreign policy became subject to harmonization with EU’s *acquis*, like any other sectoral policy. However, due to the intergovernmental framework of cooperation provided by the treaties for CFSP, the space of manoeuvre was greater in this case. The third chapter examines in more detail the impact of Europeanization over the substantive content of foreign policy in the three countries, before and after accession. This section is limited only to domestic institutional changes at national and European level.

i) Hungary (1997-2008)

The accession phase strengthened the role of the Hungarian MFA even further as the operational centre of coordination of European integration. This status of the MFA remained virtually unchallenged until after accession, even if two changes of government occurred during this period.⁵² According to the relevant governmental decree (2179/1998) the MFA leads the accession process in its entirety, heads the Hungarian delegation, represents the government within the framework of the institutional basis of the association agreement and reports on all issues related to the accession process to the government and Parliament (see Vida, 2002: 59).

The decision taken by the Orbán government in 1998 to close down the Cabinet of European Integration and the Strategic Task Force on Integration, previously set up by

⁵² The parliamentary election in May 1998 caused the replacement of Horn’s cabinet with a new coalition led by the FIDESZ, under the new name of Alliance of Young Democrats-Hungarian Civic Union (FiDeSz-Magyar Polgári Szövetség), with 38% of seats in Parliament, and including the FKFP and MDF, with 12% and 4% of the seats in the Parliament. This coalition lost the next election in April 2002 in favour of socialists and free democrats, their allies during the 1994-8 governing coalition.

Gyula Horn, and to establish a new Department of European Integration within the prime minister's office did not challenge the role of the MFA for two reasons. On the one hand the new body was mainly responsible for providing information and policy scenarios to the prime minister and not for managing EU affairs proper (Ágh and Rózsás, 2003: 15). On the other hand, as Vida (2002: 59-60) and Ágh and Rózsás (2003: 21) argue, the key element of the revised institutional architecture was the State Secretariat for Integration (SSI) of the MFA.

The secretariat was actually set up by the Horn government in 1996 and throughout the premiership of Victor Orbán remained unchanged. The head of the secretariat, with the rank of secretary of state,⁵³ was exclusively and directly answerable to the prime minister. This arrangement created an inevitable duality in the system, by separating European integration from other foreign policy matters, affecting the overall efficiency of the institution (Ágh and Rózsás, 2003: 10). At the same time, the direct link between the prime minister and the state secretary for European integration means that the head of the government wanted to have a greater control over the process. In the absence of this direct link, the access of the prime minister to first-hand information and its ability to control the decision-making process might have been weakened.

The internal structure of the Secretariat was based on two departments with distinct functions, headed by deputy state secretaries. While one department dealt with economic matters, legislation, and justice and home affairs issues, the other one was responsible for political cooperation, CFSP, institutional matters, communication and EU assistance, and support. The core of the Secretariat was the General Department for EU coordination,

⁵³ The first head of the Secretariat, during 1996-8, was Ferenc Somogyi, career diplomat and future minister of foreign affairs during 2004-6 and current ambassador of Hungary to the United States. During Orbán's premiership (1998-2002), the new state secretary was Péter Gottfried, the future president of the Office for European Affairs established within the Government apparatus in 2004. The last head of the Secretariat was Péter Balázs until 2003, the future ambassador of Hungary to the EU between 2004 and for a short while European commissioner for regional policy (until the end of Prodi Commission).

which also provided the secretariat for the Negotiating Delegation, Interministerial Committee for European Integration and the European Integration Council (Vida, 2002: 60). However, once the socialists returned to power in 2002, the Medgyessy government changed the organizational structure of the secretariat by adding a section on external economic relations. Again, the justification for such a move was that 80% of the external trade was conducted with the EU member states.⁵⁴ The title of the secretariat changed accordingly to that of State Secretariat for Integration and External Economic Relations (SSEIER). The new arrangement was short lived since in 2004 the secretariat was phased out due to Hungary's accession to the EU.⁵⁵

Another key position established during the accession phase was that of Chief Negotiator. Different from Slovakia and Romania for this matter, the role of chief negotiator in Hungary was entrusted to the head of the Permanent Mission to the European Union. Apparently, the fact that the chief negotiator was appointed the Hungarian ambassador to the EU,⁵⁶ Endre Juhász, was due to the need for direct contact and proximity with Brussels institutions, especially the Commission. The head of the Negotiating Delegation, overseeing the activity of the chief negotiator, was the foreign minister, assisted by the head of the SSI (Ágh and Rózsás, 2003: 14, Vida, 2002: 60). This arrangement suggests a separation between the operational tasks, entrusted to the ambassador in Brussels, and political tasks, retained by the foreign minister. Furthermore, after concluding the accession talks, the newly created position of minister without portfolio in charge of coordination of European affairs, assigned to the former chief negotiator, did not challenge the role of the MFA. It should be remarked that this position

⁵⁴ See also the figures on the website of the Hungarian Investment and Trade Development Agency, viewed March 2010, online http://www.itdh.com/engine.aspx?page=foreign_trade.

⁵⁵ MTI, March 25, 2003, 'Foreign Ministry to be reorganized.'

⁵⁶ Endre Juhász is a career diplomat, appointed as the head of the permanent mission of Hungary to the EU in 1995 and as chief negotiator between July 1998 and April 2003. Since 2004, Endre Juhász is the Hungarian representative in the Court of Justice of the European Communities.

was created against the background of the reshuffling of Medgyessy cabinet in May 2003. It seems that its aim was to offer a temporary governmental seat to the former chief negotiator, at least until he took over new responsibilities as one of Hungary's representatives in EU institutions.

Despite the fact that the contribution of Hungary to the development of CFSP was positively assessed by all regular reports of the Commission, the same cannot be said about the administrative capacity to implement in full the CFSP provisions. The regular reports issued in 1999 and 2000 pointed to the fact that the MFA needed to make further structural changes (European Commission., 1999a, 2000a). Moreover, while the report issued in 2001 observed that the administrative capacity of the MFA was strengthened, and that both the positions of political director and that of European correspondent were created (European Commission, 2001a), the report published one year later signalled that the MFA

'has an administrative set-up, which is basically compatible with EU CFSP structures. It has a European Correspondent, but no Political Director yet. However, there is an equivalent post whose holder assumes the Political Director's tasks in co-operation meetings with the EU.' (European Commission, 2002a).

The two reports are contradictory with regard to the setting up of the position of political director. It is plausible to assume that this misunderstanding was caused by the erroneous or confused information provided by the Hungarian authorities to the European Commission and wrongly interpreted by the experts in charge of elaborating the report. The fact is that, although the CFSP chapter was easily concluded (see also chapter seven, p. 189), the very question of administrative capacity, one of the Copenhagen criteria for accession, created some difficulties even for the MFA, a front line ministry, directly exposed to and involved in dealing with the EU.

Following the formal accession of Hungary to the EU, the role of the MFA on the coordination of European Affairs was challenged once again. From the 1st of January 2005

the European affairs unit of the MFA was transferred to the Office of the Prime Minister. This decision may be explained again with reference to the dynamic of governing coalition politics, although the personal rivalry between the Prime Minister Péter Medgyessy and the Foreign Minister László Kovács, both top leaders of the Hungarian Socialist Party, played a role as well. Two factors facilitated the eventual adoption of the decision to transfer the European unit from the MFA to the PM's Office. On the one hand, coalition politics led to a cabinet reshuffle, following the stepping down of the Prime Minister Medgyessy in August 2004 and his replacement with Ferenc Gyurcsány. On the other hand, the Foreign Minister Kovács took over the post of European Commissioner in November 2004, which meant that a key opponent to such a measure withered away.

However, the management of European affairs by the Office of the Prime Minister was short lived. Instead of streamlining the coordination process, it resulted in ineffective management. Simply the procedure of transfer of an entire office from the MFA to the Government paralysed to a certain extent the activity of the affected unit, not only operationally, but also psychologically (Interview, Péter Balázs, Budapest, 2008). The uncertainty with regard to the future status had a negative effect on the operation of the unit at a time when the management of post-accession funds was a matter of key importance. Hence, after the general elections in 2006, the European coordination returned to the MFA. Similar to the previous instances where the role of the MFA was challenged by the inter-institutional competition, the Foreign Service emerged as the main actor responsible of managing European affairs.

Currently, the European Director with the rank of State Secretary heads the European Affairs Directorate of the MFA. The Department is the main coordinator body linking the executive and the legislature; it is also responsible of the functioning of the Interministerial Committee for European Coordination (Kovács, 2006: 22-25). The fact that this position

was entrusted to Tibor Kiss, the former Ambassador to the EU for the period between 2004-2009, suggests a transfer of knowledge and skills acquired at European level to the domestic, day-to-day coordination of European affairs (see next chapter for a more detailed discussion about the elite socialization).

ii) Slovakia (1999-2008)

During the accession stage, the position of the Slovak MFA was further consolidated within the system of coordination and management of European affairs. In contrast to the early years of searching and institution building, the foreign ministry became able to cope with the daunting task of representation, policy-making, policy coordination, and strategy development. As Bátorá (2003b: 271) argues, during the early years of its existence, the position of the MFA was subject to frequent changes in reaction to shifting foreign policy priorities. In contrast to numerous changes at the MFA's helm during the first years of Slovakia's existence as an independent state, in the period between the 1998 and 2006 only Eduard Kukan held the foreign minister portfolio.

The position of deputy prime minister in charge of European integration was maintained in the new governmental coalition, being offered to Pavol Hamzik, a member of the Party of Civic Understanding. The Deputy Prime Minister for European Integration also chaired the Ministerial Council for European Integration, which had the aim of providing the high-level political coordination. The operational support was provided by the Department of European Integration (DEI) in the General Secretariat of the Government, reporting to the Deputy Prime Minister and coordinating the activity of 29 sectoral working groups and 15 European Integration units established in the ministries (European Commission, 1999b). It should be noticed that this department relied on only ten experts as of 1999 and this number actually decreased over the following years.

Because of the limited capability to undertake the task of coordinating and managing European integration, support for the coordinator role of the Deputy Prime Minister was provided by the MFA, through the State Secretary for European Integration and the relevant European Integration Section of the MFA.

Besides, the new position of chief negotiator was created within the MFA and entrusted to Ján Figel', a State Secretary in the MFA and leading member of the Christian Democratic Movement.⁵⁷ The Chief Negotiator was also the chair of the advisory body for the Ministerial Council of European Integration. The advisory body consisted of the heads of the European Integration units and the heads of the working group of the Negotiation Team, and was chaired by the Chief Negotiator (see Bátora, 2003: 271-82). The decision to create a special position of chief negotiator within the MFA was similar with the arrangement foreseen in Romania, as well as in some other candidate countries; however, it differs from the Hungarian solution, which assigned this task to the head of the Permanent Representation to the EU.

Different from Hungary, the regular reports of the European Commission did not mention any problem with regard to the administrative capacity of the MFA. In fact, the regular report on Slovakia's preparedness in 2000 observed that '*Slovakia has in place all the necessary administrative capacity to handle CFSP*' (European Commission, 2000b). Furthermore, the 2001 and 2002 reports pointed out that the MFA is well staffed and functioning (European Commission, 2001b, 2002b). The rapid reaction of the Slovak government to comply with the EU demands fits well with the overall approach of 'catching-up' with the Visegrad countries, invited to open the accession talks earlier.

During the summer of 2003, the year before accession, the European expertise in the MFA was concentrated in two inter-related units, namely the Section of Bilateral

⁵⁷ With the accession to the EU, Ján Figel' became the first Slovak European Commissioner between 2004 and 2009.

Cooperation and the Section of European Affairs.⁵⁸ The difference between the two is that the former dealt with individual European countries on a territorial basis, while the latter with the EU as a whole (Bátora, 2003: 275). In turn, the difference between agendas and visions negatively affected the quality of the policy output and effectiveness of the coordination process (Bátora, 2003: 275). The intention at that moment was that after accession the MFA would play the main coordinator role in relation to other state agencies responsible for dealing with the EU. However, such expectations might have been criticized on the ground that they reflect a *Realpolitik* approach to external relations, one which plays down the fact that after accession the EU processes and policies became an integral part of domestic politics, not merely an issue of external relations (Bátora, 2003: 276).

Therefore, in the aftermath of accession, the system of coordination in the Slovak Republic remained centred on the DEI within the office of the government, even if the role of the MFA became more important in contrast to the previous years, especially in operational terms. Following the formal accession in April 2004, the role of the MFA was further strengthened. This was because the coordination centred on the deputy prime minister did not work very well (Interview, Eduard Kukan, Bratislava, 2008). For instance, if during 1998-9 the number of staff in the Department of European Integration within the Office of the Government was around ten, as of 2008 it is five, while the corresponding number of expert personnel in the MFA grew from ten before 1999 to around 50 as of 2008. The increase in the number of staff accompanied the change in the organizational structure. The Section of European Integration established in 1999 was divided after accession into two departments, one dealing with common sectoral policies and institutional affairs, the other with foreign and security policy.

⁵⁸ This is the inheritor of the Section of European Integration, created in 1999.

iii) Romania (1999-2008)

Romania received the invitation to open the accession talks from the European Council in December 1999. The invitation found Romania's politics in turmoil due to an internal political crisis that led eventually to governmental reshuffling. The newly appointed technocratic prime minister, Mugur Isărescu, the head of the Central Bank,⁵⁹ decided to reorganize the governmental office by moving the DIE to the MFA. The position of the minister delegate for European integration and head of the DIE, occupied by Alexandru Herlea since 1996, was also removed. These decisions were the result of political bargaining with regard to the distribution of portfolios between political parties making up the governing coalition. The consequence was that the MFA was placed for the first time in the strongest position with regard to the management of European integration. The new foreign minister in Isărescu's cabinet and chairman of the Democratic Party was Petre Roman, the first prime minister of post-communist Romania. The political clout of the new foreign minister may also explain the decision to attribute the key role in European affairs to the MFA. It would have been hardly acceptable for a political character of this calibre to accept that the management of European integration was the responsibility of a simple department within the Prime Minister's Office.

The general elections in the autumn of 2000, won comfortably by the Social Democratic Party of Romania (PDSR), caused a change of government and brought about a new approach of how the management of European affairs should be organized. The social-democrat government headed by the Prime Minister Adrian Năstase put forward a governmental configuration that included a completely new Ministry of European Integration. The design of a dedicated ministry for European integration was not a very

⁵⁹ Mugur Isărescu returned as head the National Bank of Romania following the ending of his prime ministerial mandate in December 2000.

popular option in other candidate states, though some similar arrangements came about (Dimitrova and Toshkov, 2007: 975). Such a decision might be seen as an attempt by the new Romanian cabinet to demonstrate its *bona fide* credentials and determination, given the poor record of the country among other candidates (Vachudova, 2005). At the end of December 2000, other candidate countries, invited to open the accession talks at the same time, were well ahead of Romania with regard to the status of negotiations. For instance, while Slovakia, Lithuania and Latvia had presented position papers for all 31 chapters of negotiations by the end of 2000, Romania did the same for only 13 (Orban, 2006: 82). In addition, many Western capitals and Brussels viewed the return to power of the party responsible for the sluggish reforms in the early 1990s with scepticism.⁶⁰

The intention behind this decision was to overcome two problems by creating a special ministry in charge of European integration. One problem is linked to the fact that the scope of MFA's activity is broader, covering other aspects of foreign relations of the country; therefore, the European integration might not always be the top priority. On the other hand, a minister has a greater political influence over other colleagues in the cabinet than a simple secretary of state. Hence, it might push the agenda and put pressure on his/her colleagues in the government (interview, Vasile Puşcaş, Cluj-Napoca 2008). That was also the intention in 1996 when a delegate minister was appointed as head of the DIE. However, in contrast to a simple department, a minister has greater resources and prestige.

This is also an illustration of the fact that, although all political actors accepted the European integration as a strategic national objective, the existence of political consensus on this matter was not enough to achieve effective results; it required the political weight

⁶⁰ European Report, January 27, 2001, 'EU/Romania: Năstase brings wishes and promises.'

of a senior member of the cabinet as a means to put pressure on other ministries and departments.

At the same time, the Negotiation Delegation for European integration was also set up within the newly created Ministry of European Integration. The position of Chief Negotiator and Head of the Negotiation Delegation was entrusted to Vasile Pușcaș, having the rank of Minister-Delegate. In this way, the objective of European integration was supposed to be represented and promoted by two ministerial figures within the cabinet. This arrangement might have also created a certain degree of overlap and competition both within the MIE and between MIE and MFA. The fact that the holders of the portfolio of minister of European integration were close allies of the president within their respective political parties might mean that the president wanted to be able to influence the policy process. Apparently, the first minister of European integration, Hildegard Puwak, was a close ally of the president Ion Iliescu, coming from the same grouping within the Social Democratic Party. Similarly, Anca Boagiu, the new minister after the general elections, was a political ally of the president Traian Basescu within the Democratic Party. For some observers, the influence of the strong presidential institution in the Romanian political system is reflected in the greater fragmentation at the top level of the executive and the existence of two ministries dealing with European affairs, one apparently defending the president's views and interests (Dimitrova and Toshkov, 2007: 978).

Throughout the period between 2001 and 2007, the main role in the management and coordination of European affairs belonged to the MIE, even if the general elections in 2004 replaced the government of the Social Democratic Party with a centre-right coalition.⁶¹ In this case, the change of government and majority in the Parliament did not lead to a new

⁶¹ Following the result of the parliamentary elections in 2004, the cabinet was formed by a coalition of the Justice and Truth Alliance (made up of the National Liberal Party and the Democrat Party) and the organization of the Hungarian minority (Hungarian Democratic Union of Romania).

reorganization of the system of coordination. This was due to the timing more than anything else, given the fact that the negotiations talks were about to be completed in few months time. However, role of the Ministry of European Integration was questioned even before accession to the EU on 1st January 2007, and against the background of a protracted political crisis that would determine eventually the break-up of the governmental coalition.

A first step was the creation in December 2006 of a Department of European Affairs within the Office of the Prime Minister. The new department was designed to take over most of the responsibilities of the defunct MIE. The new department is directly subordinated to the prime minister and is responsible, jointly with the MFA, for coordinating European affairs. The second step was the formal disintegration of MIE, which became a ministry in charge of regional development. Part of the staff was transferred to the MFA (interview, MFA, Bucharest, 2008). In fact, the post-accession reorganization of the system of coordination of European affairs was a return to the pre-accession period, where the coordination was centred on a department within the Prime Minister's Office. From this point of view, the system centred on the Ministry of European Integration might be seen as an *intermezzo* designed to respond to the needs of conducting and concluding the accession talks and not as a long-term solution to the daunting task of coordinating European affairs.

However, the MFA remained the primary institutional actor in charge of the CFSP, similar to the situation in other candidates or member states. The difference was that in some countries the MFA had an integrative and comprehensive role in the management of European affairs, while in other countries this role was mainly limited to foreign policy. In Hungary for instance, the MFA became the major actor in charge of both community and intergovernmental type of European affairs. In Romania the allocation of responsibilities followed a conception whereby the CFSP/ESDP are dealt with by the MFA while the first

pillar or community affairs are mainly the responsibility of a different institutional actor (either a department within the cabinet or a dedicated ministry).

The EU External Relations Directorate deals with the CFSP and ESDP matters within the General Directorate European Union. The other units are the directorates for EU policies, General Affairs (dealing also with inter-institutional relations), Development Aid, and Western Europe (the management of bilateral relations with EU member states and Turkey). This structure has not suffered major changes in contrast to the pre-accession period. The major change was the setting-up of the Development Aid unit, non-existent before accession, and the split of the previous Directorate for Policy and Institutional Affairs into two distinct units, namely the EU Policies and General Affairs (interview, MFA, Bucharest, 2008). Therefore, while Europeanization might be seen as responsible for the setting-up of the Development Aid unit, domestic considerations provide a more consistent explanation of the clear continuity with regard to the design and functions of operational units within the MFA.

Although various institutional adjustments at the level of domestic coordination and management of European affairs were implemented in all three countries during the post-accession period, these continued to be the result of political competition within the governmental coalitions or the inter-institutional struggle for resources and influence, rather than reactive measures to EU demands.

5.5. The changing role of the Permanent Representations to the EU

Apart from the institutional adjustment at the domestic level, the formal accession to the EU required extensive changes at the European level, in other words at the level of diplomatic missions of the new members states in Brussels. The national embassies to the EU were the institutional actors that gained the most with accession. At the domestic level,

the framework of coordination and management of European affairs was already in place. The functionality and effectiveness of different national arrangements, while tested during the accession talks, faced the challenge of full participation at all levels of EU policy making only after accession.

The formal title of the embassy of a third state or candidate to the EU is 'Permanent Mission'. Once it becomes a full member, the title changes to 'Permanent Representation' (henceforth PermRep). Before accession, the permanent missions in Brussels performed a traditional diplomatic role of representation and channels of communication. However, during the transition period from accession to full membership these embassies experienced far-reaching transformations. Measures such as the numerical augmentation of personnel, organizational and functional diversification reflected this type of change.

The setting-up of diplomatic offices to the EC by the CEE countries followed the establishment of diplomatic relations in the late 1980s-early 1990s. The CEE governments began planning the transformation of the diplomatic missions in Brussels in the years before finalising the accession talks. Both the problem of size and internal organizational structure had to be addressed. The main criteria for deciding the number of staff and internal organization were the compatibility with the structure of the Council's formations, the indicative needs of various ministries in the capital and the models offered by other member states similar in demographic terms.

The size of the PermReps reflects both the need to answer the requirements of participating in the EU activities and the reality of a country's physical characteristics. The experience of other members was a source of inspiration in deciding the appropriate design. In all cases, the number of staff was gradually but significantly increased during the period spent as an active observer, when the organizational structures were adapted to the anticipated needs arising from membership. For instance, the size of the Hungarian

PermRep was foreseen at around 60 national experts and diplomats out of about one hundred overall staff, in contrast to 20 personnel in 2003 and even fewer before. In case of the Slovak PermRep, the foreseen size was smaller, around 50 diplomats out of the total staff.

At the same time, both Hungary and Slovakia have drawn inspiration from the Austrian, Finnish, and Danish models. In a way, these models reflect more the interest and cultural affinity of Hungarian and Slovak policy-makers with the central European and Nordic political systems, rather than a ideal functional match. Austria for instance is a federal state and the federative structure of the country is also reflected in the design of the Austrian Permanent Representation to the EU. For instance, in 2005 only 17 out of a total staff of 72 are from the MFA, the remaining personnel representing other ministries, and most important, non-ministerial organizations such as the Länder, the National Bank, cities, and local communities, as well as the major interest groups (see Müller, 2001: 231-2, Neuhold, 2005: 51-2). This is hardly similar to the Hungarian or Slovak centralised political systems, dominated by a strong executive. Hence, the size of a country is only a partial indicator, offering an indicative figure with regard to the number of staff; it does not necessarily provide adaptable models of internal organization, due to different national circumstances.

Romania fits uneasily somewhere in between the larger member state of the EU and the medium and small-sized ones. With about 22 million people, it is the country with the seventh largest population, between the Netherlands with sixteen million and Poland with thirty-eight. It is perhaps a feeling of self-importance that prompted some policy-makers to look at Poland rather than the Netherlands as a source of inspiration with regard to what would be the appropriate number of staff based on the correlation between the size of the country and the functional-operational requirements of participating in the Council's

meetings. Therefore, the number of 70 seconded experts and diplomats, similar to the existing number of the Polish Permanent Representation in 2006, was considered appropriate for covering all the functional needs (interview, Rom PermRep, Brussels, 2007). This figure changed upwards in the two years after accession.⁶² As of early 2009, around 85 staff made up the Permanent Representation to the EU of Romania, excluding auxiliary personnel. The positive correlation between the number of staff and the demographic size of the country was also highlighted by other studies (Kassim and Peters, 2001: 300-1); the figures presented here provide additional support for this observation.⁶³

As a general feature, the initial nucleus of people working in the diplomatic missions in Brussels came from the MFA, but with the increase in the number of staff, experts from all other ministries were seconded to the PermReps. However, the MFA maintains its key role in CFSP and external relations matters. Except for the military staff representing national positions in the EU Military Committee (EUMC), and one or two staff from ministries of defence participating in the Political and Military Group (PMG), all other personnel involved in foreign and security policy matters come from ministries of foreign affairs. The ratio of CFSP staff is similar across PermReps, around a quarter of the total. Even if the absolute figures differ, the relatively similar percentage of people assigned for foreign and security policy matters reflect a need to balance the effective functioning within the EU Council with available resources.

Several aspects had to be taken into consideration with regard to the internal organization. In general, the way in which the Permanent Missions were organized before accession reflected the functional need to deal with the European Commission, since the

⁶² The number of staff has increased in all three Permanent Representations of Hungary, Slovakia, and Romania since the time of collecting data in 2007. The increase in the number of staff is a phenomenon affecting all Permanent Representations to the EU, reflecting the ever-expanding scope of EU activity.

⁶³ However, the PermRep of Greece contradicts this trend by having one of the most numerous staff among other representations in Brussels, despite the limited population of the country.

accession talks were conducted with the representatives of the Commission. The difference is that after accession the PermRep had to represent the country in the EU Council of Ministers. The shift to dealing with the EU Council instead of the European Commission represents a completely different logic and implies different organizational arrangements (interview, Péter Balázs, Budapest, 2008). Even if formally the Council is a single body, for practical reasons, national ministers meet in no less than nine specialized council formations.⁶⁴ Accordingly, there is a functional need for the member states to replicate the EU Council's structure at the level of the PermReps.

Another challenge, which originated back in the capitals this time, was the question of hierarchical subordination and payments of people coming from different ministries. For instance, both the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Justice have to deal with Justice and Home Affairs matters. Similarly, the Ministry of Defence and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs have responsibilities in representing the national positions in the PMG or Political and Security Committee (interviews, Brussels, 2007).

The organizational structure in the field of foreign and security policy mirrors the vertical and horizontal configuration of the EU Council. The representative in the COREPER II is the head of the PermRep in all three situations having the highest diplomatic rank. Down the hierarchical line come the representatives in the PSC, having high diplomatic rank as well. They get expert support from specialized units from within the representations. While these units should perform similar tasks, they are organized in different ways. In the Hungarian PermRep an external policy unit is responsible for

⁶⁴ Following the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty, the functions previously performed by the General Affairs and External Relations Council has been split between two new formations, namely the General Affairs Council and External Relations Council. Consequently, from 2010 there are ten formations in which national ministers meet are as follow: 1) General Affairs; 2) External Relations; 3) Economic and Financial Affairs; 4) Justice and Home Affairs; 5) Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs; 6) Competitiveness; 7) Transport, Telecommunications and Energy; 8) Agriculture and Fisheries; 9) Environment; and 10) Education, Youth and Culture.

territorial groups and control of armaments related matters; also, a security and defence unit deals with political and military aspects of military and civilian crisis management, capabilities development, NATO-EU relations, as well as with the African geographical group.

The Romanian PermRep has two specialised units as well, although having different functional responsibilities. The Political Affairs Unit includes geographical, non-proliferation, and arms control tasks (like in the Hungarian case), but also relations with the European Parliament, human rights issues, and Enlargement (these aspects are dealt with separately in both the Hungarian and Slovak PermReps). The ESDP unit has a similar scope as the one in the Hungarian PermRep. There are also differences with regard to the hierarchical chain of command. The external affairs and ESDP divisions have different heads of unit in the Hungarian PermRep, both answering to the PSC ambassador; instead, the same diplomat is the head of both units in the Romanian PermRep.

The organization of the Slovak PermRep differs in the sense that both the External Relations and the Security divisions belong to the same functional unit, answerable to the PSC ambassador. In all three cases, the unit of military representatives is distinct in the structure of the PermReps. They participate in the military working groups and committees of the EU Council and provide military advice and recommendations to the PSC ambassadors.

The three PermReps examined here show how similar functional requirements are served by different organizational configurations. This is hardly a surprise given the diversity of national organizational arrangements and organizational cultures in place at European level. It reflects neither simple convergence to a unique model nor continued divergence (Kassim and Peters, 2001: 325), but a logic of institutional reasoning. There are

inherent differences because of the absence of a unique European administrative model, and administrative idiosyncrasies or domestic political interests.

5.6. Conclusions

This chapter examined the issue of institutional change of foreign policy-making and coordination of European affairs in Hungary, Slovakia, and Romania in the context of European integration. Observing the diversity of institutional models adopted in the three countries, the question was why, given the fact that Europeanization exerts similar pressures on the candidate countries and later on full member states, do different countries respond to Europeanization in different ways? In order to answer this puzzle, the chapter investigated the role of governmental politics, which was assumed to have both a mediating and independent effect on the way in which the systems of management and coordination affairs were framed.

The historical institutionalist approach used throughout the chapter proved useful as a heuristic device for separating the two distinct stages characterizing the institutional development of the system of national coordination of European integration/affairs. This approach has also limitations. A certain pattern of institutional change does not always fit easily into the straitjacket of historical chronology. For instance, numerous institutional changes occurred in the Slovak system of coordination before the integration stage. More appropriate is to link those institutional developments with the change of the leading governmental coalition at the end of 1998 and its endeavour to catch up with the other Visegrad countries. Some other examples may be identified throughout the chapter. Therefore, the point should be made that the change in the status of the relationships between the EC/EU and the candidate countries is not necessarily associated with

institutional change. In other words, different stages of Europeanization do not cause domestic institutional change automatically.

This point has also consequences for the ‘external shock’ explanation of institutional change, previously mentioned in the theoretical chapter (see p. 57). The external shock explanation of institutional change suggests that domestic processes of institutional reproduction and permanence may be disturbed by exogenous factors, breaking the institutional reproduction cycle and creating opportunities for institutional transformation. If European integration is seen as the external opportunity creating the incentive for internal transformation, the question is why the system of coordination kept changing in some cases even after formal accession. The second explanation of institutional change provided in the previous chapter refers to the idea of dysfunctional and sub-optimal outcomes of an institutional arrangement (see pp. 57-8). A good example is the process of institution building in Slovakia, specifically the setting up of a new foreign ministry. The role of the Slovak MFA in the coordination and management of European affairs was limited during the first years of its existence due to the fact the ministry was the subject of a process of internal consolidation. For this scenario, the institutionalist theory claims that political actors take strategic decision in order to address the dysfunctional institutions. In this case, the strategic decision was to assign the responsibility for European coordination directly to the Office of the Prime Minister. As the chapter illustrated, there are other situations when the institutional change was the result of the dynamic of governmental politics or/and the intra-coalition conflict between political parties. The inter-ministerial competition and conflict for resources and power is important as well. Perhaps the most illustrative example is the competition between the economic and foreign policy branches within the Hungarian government.

At the European level, Europeanization had a more uniform effect on the manner in which the national embassies to the EU were reorganized. Here, the sub-optimal outcome thesis of institutional change means that the structure of the former permanent mission was not adapted to answering the functional requirements of dealing with the EU Council, and was therefore unable to operate effectively in the new context. The way to address this gap was to redesign the internal organization of the permanent representation by mirroring the internal structure of the EU Council and emulating existing models in other member states to satisfy the new operational demands. At the same time, the isomorphic transformation thesis of institutional change contends that institutions in a similar domain tend to look alike. In this case, the permanent representations are more similar to each other than with a traditional embassy or even other permanent missions to international organizations such as UN, OSCE, or NATO.

To sum up, despite the fact that European integration provided the incentive for transformation, the structural domestic change was shaped less by Europeanization pressures than by political and inter-institutional competition and emulation of existing models in like-minded member states. The primacy of domestic constituencies explains both the limits of Europeanization and the differentiated impact of European integration across countries.

CHAPTER 6

EUROPEANIZATION OF NATIONAL IDENTITIES

6.1. Introduction

The previous chapter provided empirical evidence supporting the argument that Europeanization affected the institutional framework of policy making in CEE countries in different ways. It also illustrated that the inputs of domestic politics or the emulation of existing models from other European countries played a more important role in this regard. Instead, this chapter moves the focus away from the EU impact on polity to the more elusive ideational dimension of Europeanization. The general question here is whether Europeanization altered in any way the self-identification and perception of national identity by the national policy-makers.

The concept of national identity itself is defined and approached in various, sometimes competing ways. This concept has, however, an inherent temporal dimension. It was argued that the existence of historical territory or homeland, common myths and historical memories, alongside mass public culture, shared legal rights and duties for all members of national community and a common economy with territorial mobility for members are the constitutive elements that give substance to any national identity (Smith, 1991: 11). Geography and historical experiences play a key role in the definition of who are the members of a national community and what is the glue keeping them together. The national identity, however, is not static, but is created and recreated through the active use of the past by entrepreneurial elites. The fact that this process is highly selective, willingly overlooking or preferring to forget some things while highlighting others, was a fact remarked long ago as crucial for nation building (see Renan, 1983: 40).

To reiterate a point already made, arguably, the three countries examined in this

thesis, as part of the CEE region, are more similar to each other than to Western European states from the point of view of the nation building process. Anthony Smith argued that the Western model of nation, what he coined ‘the civic’ model, is built on a legal-political conception of community, legal political equality of its members, and common civic culture and ideology; by way of contrast, a non-Western model, characterizing the nation building process in Eastern Europe and Asia, is based on an ethnic conception of nation, a view which privileges the community of birth and native culture, genealogy and presumed descent ties, vernacular languages, customs and traditions (Smith, 1991: 11-15).

This so-called ‘ethnic’ Eastern model to which the three countries discussed in this thesis allegedly belong has, however, a strong Germanic influence, dominated by a Romantic, 19th Century, cultural and organic view of the linkage between state, nation and ethnicity. Germany, for instance, a country belonging to the Western model of nation building, has until recently defined⁶⁵ the link between nationhood and citizenship according to the ethnic-cultural conception different from the French view (which indeed may be the archetypal example of the Smith’s model of nation-building) (for a comprehensive discussion about the differences between the French and German views on citizenship and nationhood, see Brubaker, 1992: 1-20).

Hence, even in Western European countries, including Germany, the membership of the national community as defined by the citizenship laws used to be traditionally determined in almost all continental European countries according to the *ius sanguis* (citizenship inherited from parents). Only relatively recently did the citizenship laws begin including legal provisions derived from the *ius soli* (birthright citizenship) alongside *ius*

⁶⁵ In 1999, the Bundestag (German Federal Parliament) passed the Nationality Act (entered into force in 1 January 2000), which includes more generous provisions on the granting of citizenship see <http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/diplo/en/WillkommeninD/EinreiseUndAufenthalt/Staatsangehoerigkeitsrecht.html>, viewed online January 2010.

sanguis (Bauböck, 2008). In this sense, it may be argued that the dichotomy between Western and Eastern Europe is too Manichean and simplistic.

However, while a sharp Western-Eastern dichotomy opposing an ethnic versus a civic path to nation building is controversial, this does not obscure the major role played by the ethnic view in the definition of nationhood in the three countries examined here. This understanding had significant consequences with regard to the way in which the national political community defines its role in relation to neighbours, the region, and the rest of the world. Furthermore, it pre-determines the spectrum of choices that the political elite can make in the realm of foreign policy. The range of choices is constrained by other factors too, such as military capabilities, economic strength or the configuration of alliances with other states, to put it in a neorealist terminology. However, even neorealist thinkers accept that the interpretation given by statesmen to historical and geographical experiences matters in the formation of their own political perspectives of the future (see Hoffmann, 1995: 99-100). Hence, what matters more is the political thinking giving sense and direction to military strength and economic power as well as to defining the range of preferences with regard to the type of international system and the pattern of amity/enmity with other countries.

Political choice in foreign policy is, therefore, constrained by both material and ideational factors (Hudson, 2005: 3). Although this fact is nothing new, it is worth recalling it since this chapter pays attention to the latter type of factors and the way they influence foreign policy choices. Even if CEE countries are far from being military or economic powers, the choices they make in foreign policy matters have implications for the European system as a whole. The ethno-nationalistic wars in the former Yugoslavia are powerful examples of what is the consequence of using the past and stirring up popular feelings of national pride and fear. The fact that other countries in the region, such as the

three cases examined here, did not follow the same path poses interesting questions with regard to the role that national identity factors played in the formulation of political choices.

Another important aspect is the tension between structure and agency. The very notion of national identity implies the existence of unity and coherence, structuring and pre-determining choices. In other words, there is not too much room for alternative, competing political projects. In reality, the spectrum of political forces in any given country is structured along a continuum from extreme left to extreme right. Who the members of the political community are, what they stand for and what they want to achieve is a matter of healthy political debate in any democratic polity. This brings into the equation the role-played by coalition and governmental politics as intervening variables between the external influences of the Europeanization process and foreign policy choices. For a political party or coalition of parties to be in government is instrumental to projecting its own political vision. Being outside the governmental game or, even worse, not being represented in the parliament at all hinders the reason for the very existence of any political party, namely that of expressing and pursuing a political agenda. While this fact is also well known, it is important to recall it as a justification for the way in which this thesis makes sense of the dependent and independent variables.

In terms of structure, this chapter has three parts. The first two sections look at the way in which political discourse in Hungary, Slovakia, and Romania defines the nation in the broader context provided by European integration. The focus is mainly on the ethnic dimension of the political discourse, although other components are important as well, such as religion or culture. It does so because ethno-national politics frequently troubles bilateral relations between the three countries. As Vladimir Tismăneanu remarked (1998: 154), ethno-nationalism was the most ostentatious expression of the post-communist moral

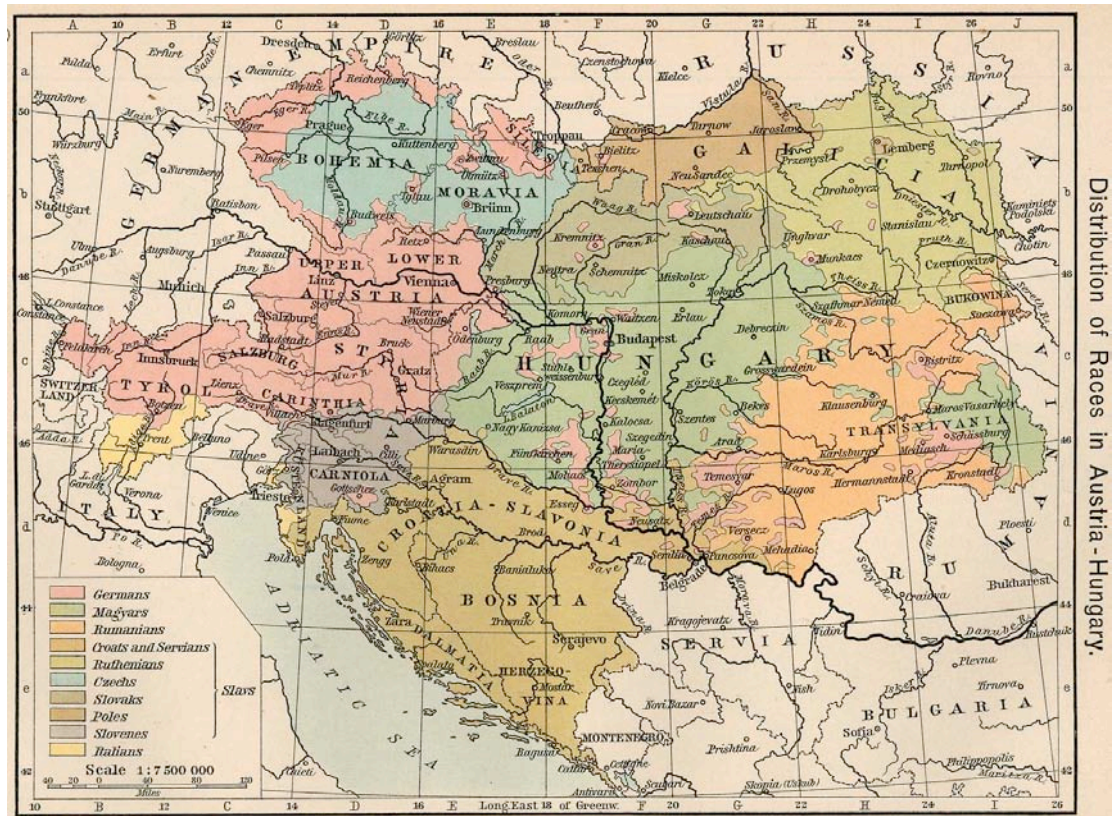
crisis characterized by collective anxiety, disorientation and disenchantment, which created a fertile ground for myths and fantasies of all kinds. Besides, as the post-EU accession political developments in Slovakia demonstrate, European integration is far from being a panacea for nationalism. Against this background, the third section examines the more specific topic of the socialization of foreign policy elite, especially policy-makers most immediately involved in dealing with European affairs, namely diplomats in Brussels and in the ministries of foreign affairs in national capitals and it traces the limits of the socialization process. It also approaches the question of how the perception of the distribution of power within the EU affects the process of socialization of national political elites (see also the methodological chapter).

6.2. The Politics of National Identity

Hungary, Slovakia, and Romania are both geographically and historically interconnected and this was one important reason for their selection as case studies. Throughout history, the fate of the Magyars, Slovaks, and Romanians (especially Romanians from Transylvania) was intertwined in a minority-majority and political and administrative domination-subordination relationships (see Map 1).

It is not the point here to make an incursion into history, but it is important to recall the fact that the completion of the Romanian national state and the creation of Czechoslovakia in the aftermath of the First World War coincided with the disintegration of the Austro-Hungarian Empire in a classical example of realist international politics where the gain of one country results in the loss of other country.

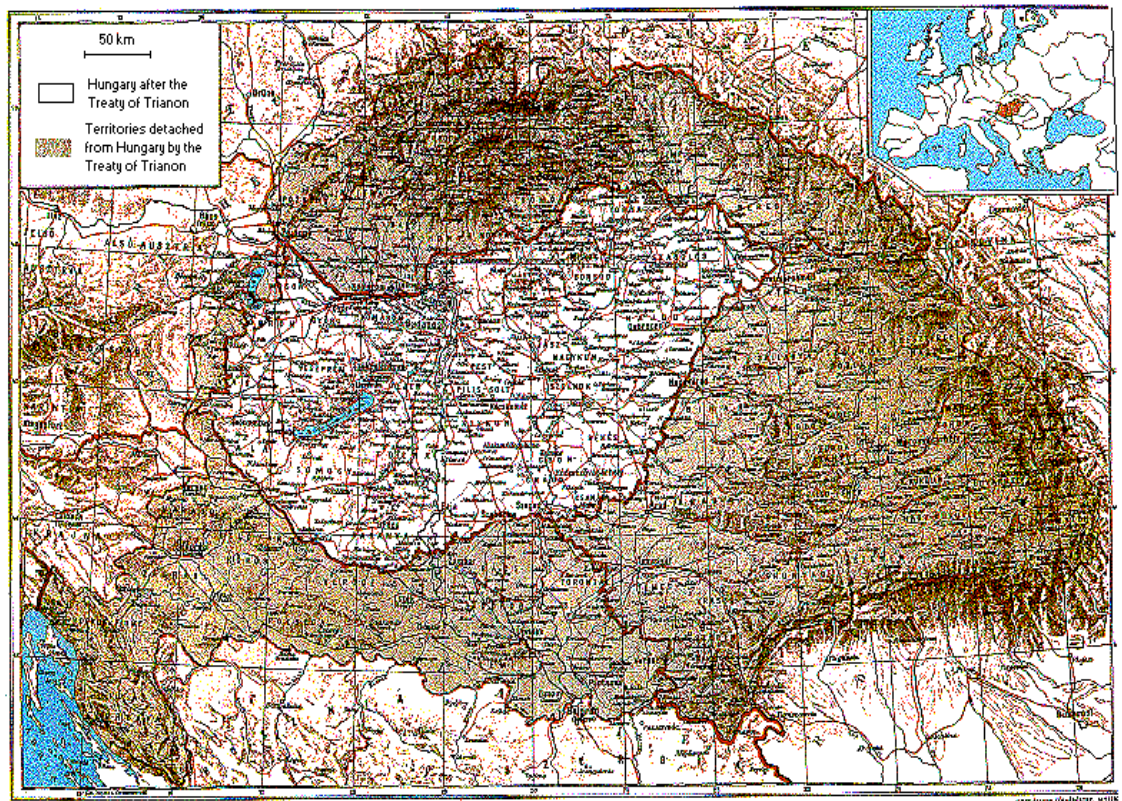
Map 1. The Austro-Hungarian Empire, 1911⁶⁶



Due to historical circumstance, but also as a result of a political agenda wilfully pursued by national elites, the process of nation building in the three countries presents important differences. Before the First World War, Hungary was politically centralized and ruled by a fiercely nationalist and almost exclusive Magyar elite, although the Hungarian population was only about half of the total population (Macartney 1937: 22-26, Taylor, 1948: 185, cited in Brubaker, 1995: 195). The fact that Hungary was reduced to one third of territory and two-fifths of its population in favour of neighbouring countries (Brubaker, 1995: 195) by the terms of the Treaty of Trianon (see Map 2) was deeply resented by all Hungarians as the most devastating tragedy in their history (Lendvai, 2003: 373).

⁶⁶The Map of Austria and Hungary in 1911 from the Perry-Castañeda Library Map Collection, University of Texas at Austin, online http://lib.utexas.edu/maps/historical/shepherd/austria_hungary_1911.jpg

Map 2. Hungary Before and After the Treaty of Trianon (The Paris Peace Treaty, 1920)⁶⁷



At the same time, for the first time in history, Hungary became a more homogenous state, overwhelmingly inhabited by Magyars (see Map 3 for a contemporary map of CEE). In contrast, the ethnic composition of both Romania and Czechoslovakia became even more diverse than was the case before the war. The nationalistic policies pursued in both countries aimed to keep the newly acquired ethnic minorities down.⁶⁸ These policies became truly effective only after the Second World War with the installation of communist regimes, greatly helped by the Soviet Union and the presence of the Red Army.

The communist regimes attempted to replace the ideology of nation with the

⁶⁷ From Magyar Elektronikus Könyvtár, available online <http://www.zum.de/whkmla/histatlas/eceurope/haxhungary.html>, accessed on January 2010.

⁶⁸ In the case of Czechoslovakia the expulsion of Germans (mainly), but also Hungarians and others as a consequence of the Beneš Decrees by stripping them of citizenships and confiscating their properties was a peculiar expression of national policy in action.

ideology of a trans-national classless society. To a certain extent, the shift away from the politics of national identity was more salient in Hungary than in Romania or Czechoslovakia. As László Deme (1998: 307) explains, the political vision of Hungarian communists played down the importance of territory and the nationalism of the past was rejected in favour of good relations with the neighbouring socialist countries. This line of thinking is close to that characterizing the post-communist approach to foreign policy pursued by the Hungarian Socialist Party of Gyula Horn, Peter Medgyessy and Ferenc Gyurcsány. There is a certain degree of continuity between the approach of the Hungarian communist party and that of its predecessor, the Socialist Party.

At the same time, the communists in Romania and Czechoslovakia were more inclined to pursue further the nationalist policies of the inter-war and pre-war periods as a mean of national consolidation. Katherine Verdery (1991) made an eloquent demonstration of the fact that the nationalist policy of the communist elite in Romania had deep intellectual roots dating back to the 17th Century. She argued (1991: 3: 100) that, far from getting rid of the national idea, national ideology was appropriated by the communist regime as a way of securing greater legitimacy (see also Chirot, 2005: 154). One important component of the idiosyncratic brand of Ceaușescu's national Communism was the ethno-nationalist rhetoric, directed primarily at the country's Hungarian minority combined with a highly popular emphasis on foreign policy independence (Pop-Elecheș, 2008: 470). The national discourse was and still is accepted by almost all Romanians, therefore benefiting from a strong legitimacy (Verdery, 1991: 11). Nationalism is embedded into the ideologies of all political parties in various degrees and expressed with variable intensity (Pop, 2006: 127).

The situation in Czechoslovakia was even more complicated due to the nature of the relationship between the Czech and Slovak nations. The ideology of Czechoslovakism

implied the acceptance by the Slovaks of Czech priorities and values while the Slovak agenda played only a secondary role for the decision-makers in Prague (Shepherd, 2000: 135). The Slovak identity was built not only against the Hungarians, but against the Czechs as well insofar as the Slovaks expected Czechoslovakia to be a common state for both Czechs and Slovaks while the Czechs saw it only as a Czech state (Auer, 2004: 143). For some authors, the official doctrine of Czechoslovakia, Czechoslovakism, had a truly hegemonic nature preventing Slovaks from asserting their own national identity and enjoying an equal role with the Czechs (Balzova, 1994).

The short-lived Slovak state created during the Second World War (1939-1945) turned out to be seen by nationalist historians, mainly historians from the Diaspora, as the first independent Slovak state in modern times, a fact that would justify in itself a more relaxed attitude with regard to the accusations that it was only a puppet state of the Nazi regime in Germany (Findor, 2002: 195). This controversy surrounding Slovak historiography acquired more contending tonalities after the fall of communist regimes in CEE.

The political regime of Vladimir Mečiar made extensive use of the nationalist interpretation of history, being repeatedly accused of abusing and distorting the past as a way of enhancing his political legitimacy. The first years of the newly born Slovak republic were characterized not only by state- and nation-building endeavours, but also by governmental-sponsored nationalism, populism, and authoritarianism (see Bútorá et al., 2003: 52, Carpenter, 1997: 212, Vachudová, 2005). However, as Stefan Auer pointed out (2004: 149), the arguments about the past reflected primarily the political aspiration of political elites with respect to the nation and the state in other CEE countries as well, such as Poland, the Czech Republic, Romania and others. Again, it is not the aim of this thesis to map and discuss the controversies in the field of historiography in CEE, but it considers

that it is important to contextualise, even briefly, the political discourse with regard to the politics of national identity in the three countries.

Map 3. Central and Eastern Europe in 2001⁶⁹



The absence of the theme of national identity from the political discourse of Hungarian communist party was replaced in early 1990s by a vocal affirmation of it. In fact, the political discourse on national identity reflected two distinct political visions. One,

⁶⁹ The Map of Central Europe in 2001 from the Perry-Castañeda Library Map Collection, University of Texas at Austin, online http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/europe/central_europe_pol01.jpg

outspoken and assertive, was that of the right-wing political forces, mainly represented by politicians like József Antall and Victor Orbán. The other, resembling more the reluctant approach to the national question of the communist regime, was that promoted by the Socialist Party.

The right-wing governments of József Antall and Péter Boross until 1994, and Viktor Orbán, between 1998 and 2002, were more interested in the fate of Hungarians living abroad, to a certain extent detrimental to the objective of good relations with the neighbourhood countries. This approach stirred up concerns among Hungary's neighbours about the 'hostile' intentions of Budapest. Famous statements such as that at a rally of the Hungarian Democratic Forum, on 15th December 1990, when he declared that although he considered himself to be the Prime Minister of 10 million Hungarians, in spirit he wished to be the Prime Minister of 15 million Hungarians,⁷⁰ could do nothing but to provoke angry reactions from Bucharest and Bratislava (as well as Belgrade). In fact, as Antall's foreign minister Jeszenszky tried to make clear later on, these declarations had only paraphrased the provision of the Hungarian Constitution, which states under Art. 6(3) that

*'the Republic of Hungary bears a sense of responsibility for the fate of Hungarians living outside its borders and shall promote and foster their relations with Hungary'*⁷¹ (Jeszenszky, 2006, see also in Solyom and Brunner, 2000).

Moreover, the Constitution also provides under Art 6(1) that

*'The Republic of Hungary renounces war as a mean of solving disputes between nations and shall refrain from the use of force and the threat thereof against the independence or territorial integrity of other states.'*⁷²

Even so, all attempts to provide assurances that Hungary would never seek to modify frontiers by force (Cottey, 1995, Kun, 1993, Schöpflin, 1993, Tismăneanu, 1993) were

⁷⁰ MTI Econews, December 15, 1990, 'HDF National Rally - Antall's Speech'.

⁷¹ The Constitution of the Republic of Hungary, Act XX of 1949 as revised and restated by Act XXXI of 1989 as of 1 December 1989, presented as Annex in László Sólyom and Georg Brunner (2000) 'Constitutional judiciary in a new democracy. The Hungarian Constitutional Court', Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

⁷² Ibid.

interpreted as implicit submission to the fact that, in extremis, the borders might be changed without recourse to force. Although this approach might suggest a sense of vulnerability in Bratislava and Bucharest vis-à-vis Budapest, the real target was the domestic audience. The nationalist parties in government in both Slovakia and Romania were encouraged by the pressures of Hungarian nationalists in their policy of national cohesion building (Dunay, 2004: 201). The nationalist forces needed each other; they needed a nationalist counterpart in a neighbourhood country as a way of self-identification through opposition with the 'Other'. They exploited the ill-fated declarations coming from Hungary in order to secure internal popular support and to pursue their anti-minorities agendas while depicting the Hungarian ethnic minorities as a Trojan horse or fifth columnists (see also Haughton, 2005: 36). The pursuit of the ethno-nationalist agenda even led to an outburst of inter-ethnic violence in the Transylvanian city of Târgu Mureş, in March 1990.

In contrast, the politics of national identity pursued by the left-wing government of Gyula Horn, in power between 1994 and 1998, emphasized the theme of good neighbourly relations

*'...our foreign policy's most urgent task is to begin to eliminate the tensions which burden the relationship between Hungary and some of its neighbours (...). Without improving our relationship with our neighbours, we do not have a chance of promoting an improvement of the situation of the Hungarian minority living there or of promoting an assertion of their rights.'*⁷³

The change of approach bore fruit; in March 1995 the basic treaty with Slovakia and in September 1996 with Romania were signed.

The Hungarian Status Law promoted in 2001 by the FIDESZ government soured again the bilateral relations with neighbouring countries (Pittaway, 2003: 70, Waterbury, 2006: 484). For many observers, the leaning of the right-wing Federation of Young

⁷³ BBC Summary of World Broadcasts, July 16, 1994, 'New Government Programme; Horn presents his government programme'.

Democrats coalition towards explicit nationalism was motivated more by populist domestic considerations rather than an intrinsic belief in and desire to support Hungarians living abroad (Vachudova, 2005: 151, Waterbury, 2006). For instance, on the eve of parliamentary elections in 2002, the then incumbent Prime Minister Orbán employed an identity-centred discourse, claiming that

‘Fifty-four people out of one hundred say they are very proud to be Hungarian (...) Thirty-six out of one hundred say they are quite proud. Of course, there are those who say they are not proud to be Hungarian, but they will vote for another party.’⁷⁴

The competing perspectives on the national question, differentiated along ideological lines, confirm therefore the relevance of national political cleavages. However, in the case of Slovakia any discussion about the overlap between ideological cleavages and political visions of mainstream political parties has to take into account the newly acquired statehood of Slovakia and the obvious need to consolidate the state structure and the nation irrespective of the redistributive, neoliberal or conservative ideologies of these parties. Given this specific context, the main split on the national question is, on the one hand, that between the nationalist/radical nationalist parties and the moderate ones, and on the other hand, between the Slovak parties and that of the ethnic Hungarian minority. The relevance of the latter cleavage is best illustrated by the stance on Kosovo declaration of independence, discussed in the next chapter.

The former cleavage is visible in the pattern of coalition government formation. The nationalist-populist parties formed the government for most of the time before 1998. The parliamentary elections on June 2006, led to the replacement of the centre-right coalition government of Mikuláš Dzurinda with a new government formed around a new political party, Direction-Social Democracy (SMER-SD, Smer-sociálna demokracia), created by Robert Fico, who became the Prime Minister. The new cabinet also included the ĽS-

⁷⁴ The New York Times, April 7, 2002, *Premier Plays to Hungarian Pride, and Far Right*.

HZDS⁷⁵ and the SNS, both governing political parties during the Mečiar era. Their return as governing parties was received with concern in Europe, as well as in Hungary, worried about the fortunes of the Hungarian minority in Slovakia.⁷⁶

The return of the SNS, as a partner in the coalition government, offered a more visible platform for the SNS leaders to express offensive political statements targeting the Hungarian minority and often the Hungarian government itself. It pitted the SNS against the Hungarian Coalition Party, the two organizations which were created to respond to national and ethnic concerns (Malová and Učeň, 2007). This situation was aggravated by the reservation of Prime Minister Fico to distance himself and the government from the radical views expressed by Ján Slota, the chairman of the SNS or other members of the party. Moreover, the attitude of the Prime Minister himself suggested on various occasions that he does not disagree with the positions expressed by his coalition partners, even if this might have been a political calculation aimed at preserving the coalition's stability (Malova and Učeň, 2009: 1103). This situation was a continuous source of tension affecting the bilateral relations between the two countries and reinforcing the extremists' camps both in Slovakia and Hungary.

This cleavage is also relevant in the case of Romanian politics, although the radical nationalist parties lost ground during the last few years. According to Pop-Elecheș (2008: 471), the quest for greater domestic and external credibility led PDSR to avoid a costly political alliance with the nationalist Greater Romania Party (PRM, Partidul România Mare) and to govern between 2000-2004 with the parliamentary support of the Democratic

⁷⁵ In March 2000, HZDS changed its name into the 'People's Party – Movement for a Democratic Slovakia' (ĽS-HZDS, Ľudová strana – Hnutie za demokratické Slovensko).

⁷⁶ The association of SMER with SNS led the Party of European Socialists to decide in October 2006, a few months after the inauguration of the new cabinet in Bratislava, to provisionally suspend SMER's membership on the grounds of breaking the PES's code regarding respect for human rights, especially the rights of ethnic minorities, and commitments to democracy. See PES, October 2006, 'SMER suspended from PES political family', online <http://www.pes.org/en/news/smer-suspended-pes-political-family>, viewed in July 2009.

Alliance of Hungarians in Romania. Although the PRM, the main extreme right party, recorded a historic peak in the previous years, being the second largest political party in the Parliament in the legislature in 2000-2004 and the third between 2004 and 2008 (in both cases it was an opposition party), it failed to get enough votes to pass the 5% threshold in the 2008 Parliamentary elections.⁷⁷ This may also suggest the erosion of the electoral appeal of the nationalist discourse. In fact, not the fading away of the nationalist appeal is the main reason, but the fact that other political actors, such as the incumbent president Traian Băsescu, appropriated themes of the moderate nationalist discourse weakening the radical nationalist forces.

At the same time, the fact that the political organization of ethnic Hungarians in Romania became directly involved or indirectly supporting the coalition cabinets of the last decade, as well the erosion of the electoral base of autochthonous nationalist parties and their marginalisation towards the fringes of the political spectrum, greatly contributed to the emergence of a convenient *modus vivendi* between the Romanian majority and Hungarian minority. The UDMR played a constructive role in the political process, either supporting the cabinet in the Parliament or directly participating in the coalition governments with political parties of both left and right ideological orientation (with the exceptions of radical right). It was certainly helped by its ideological flexibility, interested first and foremost in its ethnic agenda. The fact that politicians of the ethnic Hungarian party became a mundane presence closely associated with the government had the effect of diminishing the perception that UDMR is a threatening and hostile force posing a significant risk to Romanian national identity.

In all three countries examined in this thesis, historical experiences are reflected in the way in which the discourse about national identity is framed. Although the

⁷⁷ PRM polled 19.48% of the votes in 2000, representing 126 seats in the Chamber of Deputies and Senate and 12.92% in 2004, representing 45 deputies and senators.

interpretation of the past is a highly subjective experience contingent on the individual who contemplates upon it, historical facts themselves have a constraining effect over the range of options available. The multi-ethnic character of the Romanian and Czechoslovak states after the First World War was associated with a nationalist discourse, motivated by the need to strengthen the state. This type of discourse used history as a mean to legitimise the status quo and was a powerful political tool of mass mobilization and electoral support. It was successively employed by the inter-war governments, as well as the communist⁷⁸ and post-communist governments, irrespective of the very different ideological backgrounds and historical contexts.

In Hungary by contrast, the presence of kin-Magyar peoples in the neighbourhood countries was the incentive for a twofold discourse and distinct foreign policy priorities (see also the next chapter). The conservatives have appropriated the idea of the need for a more assertive national policy towards the neighbours (trying to press for greater minority rights). The socialists embraced a more 'European' approach, centred on the idea of compromise and conciliation.

The manner in which the national discourse is used in the domestic political competition is a mixture of instrumental reasons (e.g. as a way of seeking electoral support) and genuine belief. The important role that political socialization plays in shaping the popular feelings and attitudes towards the nation, state or the political regime in the CEE region is well documented; it is not the aim of this thesis to examine this aspect in particular. However, what is worth pointing out is the fact that the process of European integration is also a process of re-socialization into the rules and norms of a new political community. Insofar as most exposed to these norms and rules is the political and administrative elite most immediately interacting with the EU, the latest section of this

⁷⁸ A different opinion is that the communist regime in Czechoslovakia had pursued a rather flexible policy towards the Hungarians minority (Batt, 1996: 19)

chapter examines in more detail the process of socialization. Before that, however, the next section briefly explores how the national discourses captured and reflected the issue of European identity.

6.3. The European Identity Discourse

In all three countries examined in this thesis, the discursive identification with Europe was a constitutive element of the overall strategy of European integration. The ‘discursive identification’ does not refer to public opinion in a broader sense or to popular self-perception, but to the official position as expressed by high-level political actors. This does not mean that the two are disconnected; on the contrary, the official political discourse targets public opinion or specific target groups seeking greater legitimacy. It is a powerful tool giving voice to diffuse fears and concerns.

The discourse on Europe might be seen from two distinct points of view. One perspective treats the accession from a rationalist and instrumental point of view, where the EU is seen merely as the common market providing economic advantages to its members. The other viewpoint sees the EU as much more than an economic project; it is about a political community based on shared norms and values. As Adam Michnik (2001) pointed out, this discourse contained an idealisation of both the practice and theoretical foundation of the EU, one that portrayed Europe in opposition with the Communist past, ‘...*freedom instead of servitude, open borders and legality instead of the Berlin Wall and preventive censorship*’.

The identification with Europe in the official discourse had two major functions. One function was to legitimate the claims of the CEE countries that they have the right to be members of Western organizations (see also Hosu, 2002: 8, Schimmelfennig, 2001: 68-9). This function suggests an instrumental use of the discourse, one designed to bring about

tangible benefits. The other function was to map the geography of belongings and exclusions; Central and Eastern European countries are Europeans, belong to Europe and are different from the non-European Other (irrespective of which entity or idea embodied the image of the Other).

During the 1990s, the main themes revolved around the attempts to prove Europeanness, a shared heritage of culture and history, a common destiny and faith. This type of discourse had some inherent inconsistencies and contradictions. Emphasis is placed upon the historical continuity of the nation in Europe. Implicit in this type of discourse is the fact that continuity and temporality renders any supplementary claim about innate Europeanness obsolete. Yet, the insecurity that marked the pre-accession period proved an important incentive in favour of a discourse centred on the linkage between the present and the past.

In the words of Victor Orbán,

*‘For in Hungary it was exactly 103 years ago in 1896 that we first had a millennium. This was when we Hungarians celebrated the thousandth anniversary of our settling down in Europe after a long migration westward.’*⁷⁹

In the case of Slovakia, the heritage of the past is evoked in the very Prologue of the Constitution:

‘Bearing in mind the political and cultural heritage of our predecessors, the experience gained through centuries of struggle for our national existence, and statehood...Mindful of the spiritual bequest of Cyril and Methodius, and the historical legacy of Great Moravia...’.

The Europeanness of Romania is proved with reference to the idea that Romanians are the descendants of the Roman legions and Dacian tribes (for a discussion on the Latiness of Romania, see Boia, 2001b: 28-58); hence, their Latinness proves their Europeanness (see former Foreign Minister Meleşcanu, 1995: 5, quoted in Hosu, 2002: 9).

⁷⁹ Speech of Prime Minister Victor Orbán, ‘Hungary at the turn of the Millennium’, 29 October 1999.

The continuity in Europe is one of the main arguments, although not the only one, for the Europeanness of these countries, justifying their right of membership to Western European organizations. Another one is the theme of ‘sacrifice’. A recurrent argument in CEE countries is that these countries protected Western Europe from the threats coming from the East, such as the Ottoman Empire. This topic is also associated with the self-perception of these countries as borders, belonging to Europe and separate from non-Europe. Again, as the former Hungarian Prime Minister Orbán put it,

*‘We spent a large part of the past 1,000 years defending Western Europe from the Turkish Ottoman Empire’s westward expansion. The Turks never got to Europe. Hungary on the contrary suffered Turkish rule for 150 years’.*⁸⁰

However, on the idea of borders, the vision of the socialist Prime Minister Gyurcsány departs significantly, he making the case that:

*‘Hungary’s borders are not required to be defended either in the east or in the west, because as a result of historical changes since the end of the cold war all direct external threats have been eliminated. Therefore, modern security policy is not about protecting our borders but about protecting our national interests in the broader sense. And these latter must be represented far away from our borders many times.’*⁸¹

Similarly, in the case of Romania, the national imagery represented Romanians as defenders of Europe against the Turks, suffering and being held back by this struggle to protect the West. The West, therefore, was conceived as having a debt to pay to Romania; Western organizations had to accept Romania as a member due to this historical liability (Boia, 2001a: 155-6).

At the same time, the discourse on Europe changed as the distance between the hopeful candidates and their accession target shrank. The justificatory and idealistic themes characterizing the pre-accession period were replaced with a discourse dominated by the topic of the search for direction and redefinition of identity coupled with the more

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ The Abridged Version of the Annual Foreign Policy Review by the Prime Minister, March 2007.

pragmatic topic of the need to augment the benefits of European integration. The search for a new identity was well summarized by the former Prime Minister Orbán when he spoke about the need for change:

‘The following picture emerges all the same: Hungary is inhabited by a small nation belonging to East-Central Europe. The Hungarian people are hardworking (...) provided it does its homework, as it has been doing up to now, by the way, it might even graduate to become a member of the European Union...Although it is somewhat better than the image of goulash Communism, it is still nothing to be particularly proud of, and it rarely touches the soul. I believe that, before accession to the European Union, it would be good to create an image of Hungary which not only has more life to it, but which is also positively vibrant with life’ (Prime Minister Orbán quoted in Kosztolányi, 2001).

Arguably, the return to the topic of national interest came to compensate for the lack of vision of what is or should be the contemporary national identity within the European context. Although there is no longer a need to build bridges over time to prove the fact of belonging to Europe, the past still features high on the political discourse. Perhaps the most visible example is the negotiation tactic of the Polish government with regard to the voting weight in the EU Council during the German Presidency of the EU. The use of the counterfactual reasoning about the potential demographic size of Poland in the absence of the losses suffered during the Second World War was shocking for other policy-makers in the EU and highlighted a lack of understanding (willingly or not) about the culture of compromise that characterizes European diplomacy. For some diplomats this behaviour goes directly against the model of historical reconciliation between France and Germany that is fundamental for the European integration project (Swoboda, 2008: 15). The use of negative historical experience in contemporary politics is so damaging and dangerous that it should be banned:

‘so, you should forget, you should close the past saying that our accession date is year zero and we start a new life. And we forget all bad things back in the past’ (interview Péter Balázs, Budapest, 2008).

However, this type of discourse is directed towards a secondary audience, namely the

national community. In fact, this audience is more important for political parties competing in national elections than the international audience. While the topic of Europeanness faded away, the themes of national politics still feature high in the competing political discourses. As some observers pointed out, post-accession developments in the new member states from CEE is a return to populism (Swoboda, 2008: 11) which is closely linked to questions of national identity.

The political discourse on Europe in the CEE countries was dominated during the last two decades by a major theme, the so-called 'return to Europe'. The fact is that this political discourse is in itself a manifestation of identity redefinition and reassertion in CEE countries. In some cases, this discourse was also the expression of an identity crisis, manifested in the difficulty of balancing the burden of the past, the pressing constraints and opportunities of the present, and the search for a project for the future. One may argue that the difficulties of the present were overcome by the promise of a prosperous future, the future being defined in terms of reintegration in the Western political, economic and security structures. The question is whether economic prosperity is enough to give direction to 'the search for a usable past' or to the aspiration to make sense of historical experiences in manners that unify rather than separate, by including triumph alongside failure and fulfilment alongside frustration.⁸²

The next section moves the focus from the broad discussion on the politics of national and European identity to the more specific topic of how the experience of dealing directly with the EU affected group identity and self-perception of the community of foreign policy-makers.

⁸² This formulation is inspired by the programme of the Carnegie Council conference "The Search for a Usable Past", October 10, 2001, online http://www.cceia.org/resources/articles_papers_reports/716.html.

6.4. Socialization, learning, and power

The assumption of this chapter is that the Europeanization of identities and interests might result in a normative shift from a traditional intergovernmental logic of defending and promoting the interests of the state to a post-national understanding that the national interest is better served by a cooperative and consensus-seeking approach to foreign policy. In order to see whether this is the case, this section looks at the extent to which the experts and diplomats from the Permanent Representations hold different views on the aims and means of EU foreign policy from those in the capitals.

The two indicators of this normative shift are: a) the way in which policy-makers perceive and act according to the EU procedural norms and rules; and b) the supranational versus intergovernmental preferences of national policy-makers. In other words, the more positive the views the national officials have on the norms of compromise, consensus seeking, avoidance of hard bargaining and respect for other member states' *domaines réservés*, the more socialised they are. Likewise, the preference for collective action at European level instead of foreign policy action conducted mainly in national terms or outside EU channels is an indicator of socialization.

The mechanism whereby national representatives learn the norms and rules characterizing the EU foreign policy culture is social learning. The indicator of the successful process of socialization is the internalisation by domestic actors of new norms and beliefs, which lead them to redefine their interests and identities, shifting their pattern of behaviour (Börzel and Cichowski, 2003: 12). In other words, their preferences and behaviour are being Europeanized.

The process of the transfer of norms and rules is mediated by the existence of the so-called norm entrepreneurs who are agents having a strong sense of appropriate behaviour in their community (Börzel and Risse, 2003: 58-9, Finnemore and Sikkink, 1998: 896,

Sedelmeier, 2006: 13). The norm entrepreneurs are those policy-makers directly involved and the most exposed to EU norms and rules, such as the experts and diplomats from the permanent representations in Brussels (PermReps), as well as those from the relevant European departments in the MFA.

Apart from the question of whether socialization follows an appropriation or instrumental path, another question relates to the fact that Europeanization as socialization depends to an important extent on the way in which the foreign policy elite perceives the distribution of power within the EU. From a formal point of view, full EU membership grants an equal right to all members. In reality, the views from CEE, as well as from other old but small member states, may highlight a different picture, one in which the large old member states are still more influential in the political process and in the design and conduct of any given policy. The perception of inequality may well impact upon the socialization of policy makers from the new member states. The internalization of the norms of compromise and consensus seeking might well be undermined if the perception of the national representatives is that the policy-making process reflects the balance of power among the member states. In this case, their policy preferences would mirror the instrumental view of how power is exercised (see also the previous chapter, p. 98 and 113).

i) Learning

The process of learning is discussed here with regard to two aspects: temporality and scope. Temporality refers to the starting point or period since when the national officials became part of the learning environment and were exposed to learning conditions. The scope of learning refers to the range of learning issues and addresses three aspects: a) learning policy issues; b) learning the formal rules and c) learning informal norms regulating the conduct of national officials in the Council of the EU.

With regard to the first aspect, the process of learning characterized the first contacts between national officials and the EU. The learning process started before the formal accession, during the period when the candidates were observers to the EU institutions. The status of ‘active observer’ is granted to the future members covering the period between the signing and ratification of the accession treaties. Hungary and Slovakia were observers for one year, between April 2003 and May 2004. For Romania, this was over one and a half years, between April 2005 and December 2006. As observers, the soon-to-be members had the right to participate in all working groups and committees at the EU Council level, to observe and familiarize themselves with working procedures. The term ‘active’ means that the new national representatives were allowed to express views and comments without having formal decision-making rights.

The experience accumulated by experts from different ministries during the accession talks allowed them to grasp a good understanding of negotiations practices with representatives of the European Commission and of the *acquis communautaire* (or political) in their specific sectors of expertise. These people were the first choice for appointment by national ministries to the PermReps, because of this experience. However, since the PermRep deals mainly with the Council, they came across a completely different working style and organizational culture (interview, Péter Balázs, Budapest 2008). For some national officials, this experience recalled past memories from school and the endeavour to learn new things (interview, Brussels, December 2007). This view is shared, in one way or another, by most people that had participated, even on a sporadic basis, in the meetings within the Council, either being from the PermRep or the MFA at either senior or junior diplomatic level.

The shared perception of the national officials from the new member states is mostly positive with regard to their insertion into the new environment. Asked about this aspect,

most interviewees expressed positive statements, the environment in the Council being described by terms such as ‘family’, ‘friendly’, or ‘good company’. As an interviewee in Brussels recalled, ‘...it is a class-like atmosphere, like school children, we are sometimes joking...’. The general feeling is that the representatives of the old member states were very helpful in accommodating the newcomers in the new setting. Besides the warm reception from the old member states, another facilitating factor for the easy adaptation was the presence of fellow negotiators from other new member states, with whom they had been in contact during the years of accession talks (interview, Péter Balázs, Budapest, 2008).

At the same time, it seems that the views on the new environment depend to a certain extent on previous diplomatic or professional experience. The national officials formerly posted in embassies in different countries and those seconded directly from the capital to the EU have a more appreciative view with regard to the operational environment within various working groups and committees of the EU Council. Conversely, for diplomats previously posted to positions in other international organizations, the EU is not so different in terms of working style and ambiance. For instance, one diplomat who had been posted to the OSCE in Vienna, having the experience of dealing with both organizations, did not find that the environment differs significantly. At the same time, he remarked that what makes the EU different is the community of values such as liberal democracy and rule of law shared by all participant countries and their national representatives. By contrast, this is not the case in an organization like the OSCE, where national officials representing liberal democracies are working together with those from authoritarian or illiberal political regimes. In this case, it may be argued that the novelty of the new environment is a facilitating factor for the socialization of the national officials as indicated by their positive versus neutral or negative views on this matter.

Learning the policy

With regard to the scope of learning, this refers mainly to three aspects: the policy itself, the procedural issues, and the informal practices. What makes the first aspect peculiar is that, at first sight, it is rather counter-intuitive. Why is learning the policy a matter that some of the interviewees considered important to highlight? Common sense would indicate that knowing the policy is crucial. Officials designated to represent their national governments in the headquarters of international organizations should be well acquainted with the policy area they are expected to deal with. They should have come from home with the homework done.

Instead, a learning-by-doing process unfolded. The starting point is that, as one diplomat pointed out,

‘... you have to learn the policy of these regions, the EU’s policy towards Latin America, and your country policy towards Latin America’ (Interview, Brussels, December 2007).

One possible explanation is that during the observer stage, due to the limited number of staff, national representatives were given multiple responsibilities at the same time, facing difficulties in familiarizing and keeping-up-date to all these new policy areas. One diplomat recalled that being one of the first to arrive in June 2003, he had to attend different geographical working groups, and only once some other colleagues arrived from capital he was able to focus on specific issues (interview, Brussels, 2007). The learning process involved the self-analysis of the country’s own priorities and positions within the EU framework; also, what level of representation in terms of diplomatic rank and experience best serves the interests of the country across the priority areas.

Another aspects that might explain why EU-specific policies had to be learned is the lack of interest towards areas outside the traditional remit of national foreign policy. The

limited interest does not translate only into a lack of awareness towards these regions, but also about EU objectives and instruments. Even for diplomats familiar with the political and economic dynamic in these regions due to previous postings in embassies overseas for instance, the EU's way of doing business was difficult to grasp at first. As one national official commented,

'...it involves a lot of learning, it is a very difficult time. You also have to be very flexible and when you are completely new, you do not know where they are talking about what' (Interview, Brussels, 2007).

At the same time, the process of learning is rewarding, in the sense that *'it is like achieving the degree at the university'* (interview, Brussels, December 2007).

Learning the formal rules of conduct

Apart from learning the substance of policy itself, the rules of the games were the subject of the learning process. On the one hand, it is about the formal norms regulating the conduct of national officials within the EU Council. This type of formal rules refers to the working methods and standard operating procedures within the Council. Historically, these rules have been subject to numerous reviews and amendments in order to reflect both the pressures coming from the expansion of the EU scope of activity as well as the enlargement (Best and Pierpaolo, 2008: 42).

While it is not the aim of this chapter to provide an overview of these rules (for further details, see Best et al., 2008, also Hayes-Renshaw and Wallace, 1997, Nedergaard, 2007: 139-80, Sherrington, 2000, Spence, 2005: 18-37), it is important to highlight the difference between the formal and informal norms regulating the conduct of national officials in the EU Council. The formal rules were laid out in the Council's Rules of Procedures adopted on September 2006 (Council of the European Union, 2006), which incorporated the amended 'Working methods for an enlarged Council. Code of Conduct' (henceforth the Code), drafted in March 2003, on the eve of Eastern Enlargement (Council

of the European Union, 2003). These rules target the preparation for and conduct of Council's meetings.

With regard to the preparation of meetings, the Code recommended that only those positions having a reasonable prospect of progress be submitted to the Committee of Permanent Representatives (COREPER) (art. 1). It also proposed that the rotating Presidency should advance the work between meetings by consulting the national delegations and asking them to set up positions in written form in advance of forthcoming meetings (art. 2-3). Likewise, there is the rule that COREPER shall avoid going over ground already covered in the preparation of its proceedings (art. 4).

With the aim of rationalising the conduct of meetings, the Code proposed several rules concerning agenda management, the role of the presidency and the behaviour of delegates. For instance, the Code recommended against placing items on the agenda for information or presentation purposes (art. 6-7). In order to balance the '*increased demand for speaking time from delegations*' with the limited '*supply of meeting time*', the Code put forward four rules to keep the length of meetings manageable by focusing on the conduct of national officials in the meeting. The four behavioural rules are as follows: a) eliminating full table rounds (art. 13); b) like-minded delegations should hold consultations in view of presenting a single, common position (art. 14); c) expressing concrete drafting proposal rather than simply disagreeing with particular proposals (art. 15); and d) not repeating points already made in the meeting (art. 17) (Council of the European Union, 2003).

The formal norms were purposefully designed to streamline the decision-making process. While the norm of prior consultation was already included in the formal requirements regulating the conduct of national representatives, the norms of consensus-seeking, trust, reciprocity, mutual responsiveness, respect for other member states'

domaines réservés and the prohibition against hard bargaining emerged as unintended consequences of previous decades of interaction and cooperation in the foreign policy field. These informal norms have given substance to what was coined as the EU's 'culture of compromise'.

Learning the informal norms of EU's 'culture of compromise'

The practical use of the norms of compromise and consensus seeking was grasped by the representatives of new member states for instance in working group meetings discussing, paragraph-by-paragraph, various documents. As one senior official recalled,

'particularly when there is a text that has to be adopted at the end of the day then has to be a debate and some time there is a long, long debate about the wording or the text, whether it be Council's conclusions or European Council's conclusions. These are very tough debates' (interview, Hungarian MFA, Budapest, 2008).

The high density of meetings at different levels facilitated the process of learning. For instance, COREPER⁸³ meets regularly once a week, the PSC holds meetings twice a week and various other working groups have similar frequency of meetings (for detailed accounts, see Hayes-Renshaw and Wallace, 2006, Nugent, 2006).

The outcome is a relative increase in the level of mutual trust. In this context, mutual trust is not an absolute concept; it refers to the expectations that representatives of other member states play according to the same rules. To know what is the position of other member states on specific issues is directly connected to the process of consultation and of mutual responsiveness. Regular telephone contacts with other national representatives in Brussels became part of the day-to-day working methods of new member states as well.

Likewise, the policy of alliance formations was another issue to learn. It is a common

⁸³ In fact COREPER meets in two formations. The COREPER 1 consists of deputy ambassadors of the member states in Brussels and deals with the issues under the first pillar. The COREPER 2 consists of the ambassadors of the Permanent Representations in Brussels and deals with political affairs, institutional affairs and foreign and security matters.

feature in the Council diplomacy that member states try to secure the support of other countries in presenting their own position as an expression of common European interest. In fact, this practice prompted some scholars to claim that a national position is 'Europeanised' by being inserted to the Council's agenda and transformed into a European matter.⁸⁴ New member states were soon asked to give their support to one initiative or another, or at least not to oppose it. It also soon became evident that with the exception of a few strategic issues, there was no clear pattern of coalition formation, which tended to be temporary and topic based.

In terms of the areas of special concern or *domaines réservés*, the remarks of the interviewee quoted above with regard to the EU's and his own country policy towards Latin America is relevant in this context too. This example was not used accidentally. Latin America is not a top priority for CEE states although it is an area of greater concern for the Iberian-Lusitanian countries for instance. As the following chapter discusses, the primary concern for the CEE countries is mostly regional in scope (e.g. Western Balkans or the EU Eastern vicinity), although their involvement in the US-led war on terror expanded the remit of foreign policy to Afghanistan and Iraq, far away from the traditional zones of interest. On the other hand, as suggested by some interviewees, the limited scope of foreign policy implies specialisation and niche expertise. The narrow specialisation is equated in this context with added value; a significant contribution of the CEE states to EU foreign policy resides in this local or regional expertise. This view is often expressed in high-level political speeches regarding the relationship between the national foreign policies and the European foreign policy. This aspect is examined in more detail in the next chapter.

To defend the national position at expert working group level refers for instance to

⁸⁴ As previously mentioned, this thesis does not adhere to this bottom-up view of Europeanization.

negotiate the content of a document that is proposed for adoption by the General Affairs and External Relations Council and eventually endorsed by the European Council. Usually, a document or proposal goes through hierarchical layers of expertise and decision and suffers substantive interventions at a lower level of policy-making. At the working group level, the discussions have a technical character and revolved often around language and the way ideas are formulated. This is a time-consuming process, leading to many hours or repeated meetings dedicated to the same document. The document proposed by the Council General Secretariat for instance is read paragraph by paragraph, each member states expressing its view – or abstaining in case of agreement with the proposed formulation. The implication of spending many hours discussing the formal language in a document is that once it is adopted by the Council it becomes ‘agreed language’ and, as in a feed-back-loop, it will be evoked when negotiating other documents or proposals at the working group level. Hence, the importance of acting at initial stages (Kassim and Peters, 2001: 314).

At the same time, although attending long meetings in the Justus Lipsius building (the headquarter of the Council of Ministers) facilitated the learning process, this does not automatically imply that the new national delegates have a positive view on the working style in the Council. Too long and unnecessary talks, lasting for half a day and sometimes going late into the night were perceived as completely ineffective, a waste of time which could hardly be afforded in a meeting of a national cabinet (interview, Eduard Kukan, Bratislava, 2008). Not only the length of meetings, but also the content of the items on the agenda was a matter of discontent. As a senior national official summed up,

‘we are working every day with such small details, invisible for normal citizens ... is complicated, insane ... we are discussing such small points that have no real influence to the real world and we don’t have time for philosophical discussion about the future of the European Union’ (interview, Brussels, December 2007).

Occasionally, the coming of a minister from the capital in order to attend a Council meeting may result in utter disappointment in the sense that most policy issues were already sorted out at COREPER level. Although usually there are sensitive political matters left for national ministers to address, on which the ambassadors could not agree in COREPER, it is also common that these matters are more important for some countries than for others. In such a scenario, for many ministers pressed by more urgent businesses back home, to attend a long meeting in Brussels is simply considered a waste of time (Interview, Peter Balázs, Budapest, 2008).

The fact that in many cases the length of a meeting is the result of the competing views and preferences of only a limited number of participants is negatively resented by those less interested but nevertheless obliged to take part in the meeting. It is not surprising that facing this type of situation, some national representatives are simply adopting various self-defence mechanisms: writing up reports during the meeting, reading other documents, adopting passive attitudes, even getting drowsy. Therefore, the view that in a Union with 27 member states the house-keeping rules are necessary and beneficial is widely shared. The fact that the too time-consuming and ineffective practice of the *tour de table* was scrapped and replaced by the rule of speaking up only when one disagrees or wants to amend a proposal and to keep the time of intervention as short as possible is considered beneficial (various interviews, 2007-2008).

However, these situations have the effect of rendering the national representatives irrelevant with potential long-term negative implications for the legitimacy and acceptability of Council's decisions. As Stephan Keukeleire remarked (2007: 10), there is a psychological effect on the national foreign ministries since the foreign ministers are not used to and do not like to feel irrelevant. The possible implication is that the member states might seek alternative fora to promote their foreign policy goals such as other international

organizations or ad-hoc like-minded groups of countries (Keukeleire, 2007: 6).

ii) Norm entrepreneurs or merely agents of national interest?

Learning is an ongoing process, although its most visible component is acquiring new knowledge. The previous section illustrated that several years of interaction within the framework of EU policy and decision-making in Brussels had certainly produced the outcome of learning formal rules and the norms of EU culture of compromise. At the same time, there is a mixed picture with regard to whether the new national representatives were socialised according to the ‘logic of appropriateness’ or they have simply learnt the new norms and rules and behave in an instrumental, rational manner, according to the ‘logic of consequentiality’.

The distinction between the two types of socialization of national officials has important consequences with regard to their role as norms entrepreneurs. In order to play this role, the national representatives in Brussels need to be genuinely committed to pressing their colleagues in the foreign affairs ministries to adopt this new normative agenda (Finnemore and Sikkink, 1998: 914). However, the distinction between the two groups of officials, those in Brussels and those in the three capitals, is not a clear-cut one. The assumption of this chapter was that there is a qualitative difference between the national officials in Brussels and their colleagues back home with regard to the depth of the socialization process. In fact, the group boundaries are blurred due to the rotation of staff between the ministries of foreign affairs and the PermReps.

Some of the diplomats who worked at the PermReps in Brussels in the early stages had already returned home while their place was being taken by newcomers. The direct experience of dealing with the Council’s working groups and committees and interacting routinely with other national representatives is different from that of the senior or junior

officials coming only occasionally from national capitals to Brussels. The fact that the diplomatic teams of PermReps have a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of the developments in Brussels is widely accepted in their respective capital cities. Their return at the end of the mandate represents a valuable transfer of knowledge, skills, and understandings back home.

In all three PermReps examined, only a few diplomats or national officials with equivalent ranks are still part of the staff. Most of them returned in the MFA or were detached to other international organizations (IOs) or embassies abroad. While the number of staff dealing with external relations and security issues witnessed an overall increase during the last few years, only a few of them were part of the team when their countries became formal members of the EU. The practice of rotation of diplomatic personnel is a regular convention in most countries, being designed to avoid narrow specialization. At the same time, the long term exposure is a facilitating factor in the process of gradually adopting norms and values specific to the national or international location where the diplomats are stationed (Beyers, 2007: 100). It is not at all clear whether the length of time spent in Brussels was enough for the national officials already re-deployed elsewhere or returned home to genuinely adopt the norms of the EU culture of compromise and consensus-seeking.

Looking at both the PermReps and the MFAs, more similarities than differences can be noticed with regard to the perception of EU norms. Although the importance of these norms is accepted, the manner in which the national officials in the capitals as well as in Brussels acquiesce to this fact reflects a certain degree of scepticism. As illustrated above, the working style in the Council is an object of criticism. The consultation is important insofar as the exchange of information helps formulating policy positions in a constructive way, likely to be accepted by the rest of the countries.

Similarly, the norm of compromise is not seen as inherently positive, but as a necessary tool in order to avoid a stalemate of the policy and political process. Some interviewees converge in pointing out that

‘You always have to keep in mind that there isn’t just the national position that you have to think about, but of course there is the overall position or the overall interest of the community that you are member of’ (interview, Budapest, June 2008).

However, the other side of the coin is that compromising in Brussels may incur undesired costs and sanctions back home. The opposition parties are scrutinizing carefully the activity of the incumbent government and are eager to use any chance to criticize the cabinet for not defending strongly enough the national interest in Brussels. The same is true for other domestic actors, such as mass media, industry, and so on.

At the same time, the norm of respecting other member states’ *domaines réservés* does not stir up too much enthusiasm either. To a certain extent even, this norm is perceived as a reflection of the distribution of power within the EU and as a way of guarding national key interests. Instead of a genuine support, the norm of *domaines réservés* is rather perceived in terms of bargaining and trade-off. Although there is also the informal norm of prohibition against hard bargaining, the everyday practice shows that soft forms of bargaining are used alongside consultation and compromise.

There is a tacit understanding of the fact that member states have different interests in different regions and that it is legitimate to pursue these interests. However, the support is conditioned, although not in an outspoken manner. The trade-off rests on the mutual support lent by member states to each other in order to further their own sets of objectives as part of the wide umbrella of EU foreign policy. For the southern countries, the Mediterranean is of major interest, for the Scandinavian countries the Baltic Sea and Russia is important and so on. The UK and France are probably the only two EU member states still harbouring global ambitions, owing to their colonial past. One diplomat

summarised this idea as follows:

‘Now we have Eufor Chad⁸⁵ ... maybe starting mid January and then during the Portuguese, we’ll be aware that Guinea Bissau is very important ... so you see that ex-colonies are showing up as potential EU missions, and of course this is fine, we understand it is fine, we would like to help them, but we would like to help also our neighbours and our priority countries (interview, Brussels, 2007).

The preponderant instrumental perception of EU norms makes the national representatives in Brussels unlikely candidates for performing the role of norms entrepreneurs in relation to their colleagues in the foreign affairs ministries and other officials responsible for the management and coordination of European affairs. This does not mean, however, that they do not exercise a significant influence over the formulation of policy in the capital. The important role played by PermReps is widely accepted by experts in the capital, especially those in the MFA (various interviews, Budapest, Bratislava, Bucharest 2008). Due to their specific position, the national representatives in Brussels had simultaneously to defend the national interests at the EU level and to mediate between the EU and the capital, in a two-level-game logic (Putnam, 1988).

In a study concerning the national coordination of European affairs by the EU member states in Brussels, Kassim (2001: 34-6) identified a list of what he coined as ‘upstream’ and ‘downstream’ functions the PermReps usually perform. The upstream functions refer to the influence of the formulation of EU policy by the national representatives in Brussels. The downstream functions refer to the channels whereby the national representatives might influence the formulation of national policy process at domestic level. Only the latter category is of interest for the aim of this study, insofar as it concerns the question of whether the national representatives in Brussels behave like norm entrepreneurs or not. The three downstream channels of influence identified by Kassim are

⁸⁵ EUFOR Chad was a military bridging operation in Eastern Chad and in the North East of the Central African Republic. Eufor Chad was deployed between January 2008 and March 2009. For details, see <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/showPage.aspx?id=1369&lang=EN>.

to report back to the appropriate national bodies, advise the capital, and participate in domestic coordination (Kassim, 2001: 36).

The reporting channel of influence refers to informing the national capital about the developments within the EU Council, what are the policy preferences of the other member states, what are the chances of a proposal to be adopted and in which form. The main source of information-gathering is the participation in Council meetings at various levels and affiliated bodies, or in informal meetings with counterparts. As one official in Brussels explained the relationship with the experts in the capital

‘I must say that I am influencing a lot because I am actually pointing out some parts of the document, of course they are reading the document, but they do not have the same reading as I do from here, because I do have also discussions here, in margins with my colleagues whereas I see in the document many other things than my colleagues’ (interview, Brussels, 2007).

The informal norms of consultation, mutual responsiveness, and reciprocity are key in explaining the close interaction with other national representatives. An important asset that national representatives in Brussels bring to the capital is that they have a comprehensive understanding of the EU’s policy and politics; they interact directly with counterparts from other member states as well as European officials. In addition, national representatives know when a particular position is unsustainable. In such a case, to carry on with the national mandate received from the capital may eventually lead to isolation in the group. Therefore, they may convince colleagues in the capital that it is not realistic to go on and that a change of the national position is required (interviews, Brussels, 2007). In turn, this provides an invaluable source of information, indispensable for the aim of reporting accurately.

Besides reporting, the national representatives are expected to advise. The advisory channel of influence is closely linked with that of reporting and information, because all reports and telegrams sent back home include suggestions and recommendations. The

advisory function of national representatives is of particular importance in policy formulation and definition of national position. As one senior official highlighted,

‘when we put something down on paper or when we discuss it even with political decision-makers, we try to influence them.. I think that is also our duty to give a realist picture to the decision-makers of what they can expect... and it is up to the decision-makers whether they take the risk or not.’ (interview, MFA, Budapest, 2008).

Hence, the recommendations sent back home are usually used as foundations for formulating national mandates on specific policy issues. The process is circular in the sense that the policy recommendations by the national representatives in Brussels are, in many cases, taken as such by the experts in the ministries of foreign affairs in the capitals and translated into national mandates which are sent back to Brussels as the official position. In this way, the national representatives in Brussels are in fact the real authors of the national mandate they have to defend in the Council. At the same time, there is a common negotiating tactic in the Council to pretend that insofar as the mandate was authored in the capital, it cannot be easily altered or by-passed by the national representatives in Brussels even if they have a greater awareness of the sensibilities of other member states. However, this argument goes on, nothing can be done since all major decisions are taken in the capital and the national representatives are simply the voice of the central government in Brussels.

The fact that the national representatives in Brussels have an important influence over the formulation of national positions in the capital is facilitated by the absence of immediate interest for issues outside the core national interests. In general, the adherence to EU statements or actions towards remote parts of the world is a formality, especially as long as it requires only political endorsements and not budgetary allocations or deployment of military or civilian personnel in crisis management operations. As one diplomat explained,

‘many times you have general positions and these general positions are that we are supporting for example the good cooperation and programmatic approach of the EU and NATO where you don’t need to have certain specific instructions’ (interview, Brussels, 2007).

Another factor that contributes to the influence of the national representatives in Brussels is the speed of the decision-making process since

‘sometimes it is so fast that actually they have a crucial influence on what would be our position on this or that’ (interview, Slovak MFA, Bratislava, 2008).

However, the situation changes when vital interests are at stake. Then, the national representatives in Brussels

‘can never take over the responsibilities of a government, which is in contact with political parties, NGOs, media, so it is back home that such decision should be taken’ (interview, Péter Balázs, Budapest, 2008)

In this case, the decisions are taken in the capital at the highest political level of the executive. The role of norm entrepreneurs of the national representatives in Brussels in relation to the MFA or other institutional actors at domestic level takes the limited form of a more balanced discourse with regard to contested foreign policy issues. The role of the PermRep is dominant especially in routine foreign policy-making. One view was that this dominant role is as significant as

‘...90%, in 90% of cases they (PermRep) have the greatest influence, that’s for sure, I have no doubt about it ... and usually it’s so specific that only who deal with on a daily basis know what is going on’ (interview, Bratislava, 2008).

Nevertheless, when it comes to sensitive issues, touching upon the national interest, other political actors became involved and the issue is open to wide contestation. This point confirms the observation of Kal Holsti (1995: 267) that:

‘...on routine and non-vital matters (...), the experts and lower officials of policy-making organizations define specific objectives in the light of their own values, needs, and traditions, often through informal alliances with bureaucrats in other countries. (...) In a crisis, where decisions of great consequences have to be made rapidly, the effect of bureaucratic processes may be reduced considerably.’

This was the case with the issue of Kosovo declaration of independence in February

2008 for instance, which is discussed in more detail in the next chapter. The role of PermReps in all three cases was limited and the MFAs attempted to soften the political stances coming from the national executives. In Slovakia, for instance, the political mandate issued by the National Council came to be the official position of the executive, constraining and changing the initial position of the MFA, which was obliged to defend this mandate at the level of the GAERC (interviews, Brussels, 2007; see also the next chapter).

6.5. Conclusions

The assumption that the internalization of new norms and rules follows the logic of appropriateness, namely that those EU norms are internalized by individual officials because they are good and right in their own, is not sufficiently backed by empirical evidence. Even if some diplomats or national experts show a genuine appreciation of the way the EU works, most of them have a more instrumental view of the process. There is a constant attempt to balance between the constraints of defending the national position and accommodating the positions of other countries.

As pointed out in this chapter (see pp. 167-8), the rotation of staff is a common practice in most foreign services, aiming to avoid the narrow specialization of the diplomatic personnel. The biographical background of the majority of diplomats interviewed in Brussels or in the capitals indicated a diversity of previous secondments in various embassies or other international organizations. The other side of the coin is that staff rotation blurs the group boundaries and makes the comparison increasingly difficult. We do not have any longer two distinct groups that can be reliably compared, but individuals moving back and forth between the two groups. While this mechanism facilitates the transfer of norms and good practices, it also raises questions about the

primary allegiance which is mainly towards the home institution and unlikely to change significantly because of the secondment for a few years in Brussels or elsewhere.

The norms of compromise, consensus, consultation, and mutual understanding are necessary given the very design of the EU. In order to have a functional EU foreign policy, the participants must behave according to these norms; otherwise, the entire process enters into paralysis with negative consequences for all. Moreover, in many cases, the view of the Council is that of a structure where even if the voices of all are listened, there is a great diversity of interests and some countries are more influential than others.

The sociological institutionalist assumption that the socialization of national representatives causes a change of collective understandings and identities is rather weak. There is strong evidence that the new national representatives have learnt new norms and rules. However, as Smith pointed out (Smith, 2000: 619), it is too much to assume that national officials give up their national loyalties in favour of a common European interest. Instead, the indicators of the socialization effect might be found in the fact that national elites are increasingly familiar with each other's positions and preferences. In addition, national officials learn that national foreign policy is strengthened by political cooperation, not weakened (Smith, 2000: 619).

The learning process is part of the accommodation into the new policy-making setting. In the initial stage, the national officials have learnt the rule of the games. In the second stage, they have started playing the game, assessing the implications of a particular position in the balance between national and European interest. The collective adherence of national representatives to the procedural norms of compromise, consensus-seeking, avoidance of hard-bargaining do not obscure the instrumental way in which these norms are perceived.

Even if the national officials have a more flexible approach, this is because they

know that within the EU framework a foreign policy position is not formulated in isolation but in consultation and cooperation with others. These norms are not necessarily seen as right on their own, but as means of avoiding a stalemate and overcoming differences of interest inherent in a Union of 27. Therefore, the role of the PermReps or MFA in the dissemination of EU's norms and rules at domestic level is limited. The highly normatively institutionalized setting of EU foreign policy-making has a constraining effect on the behaviour of national officials. As Schimmelfennig pointed out, the national representatives behave as rational actors conforming to these norms and rules in order to avoid the costs of illegitimate action, while at the same time calculating when conformity is worth the cost of complying and when not (Schimmelfennig, 2000).

The perception of power relations within the EU embodies both the view that the larger member states exert a greater influence on the policy process and the acceptance of the fact that EU membership enhances the standing of a small member. There is a general agreement that different countries, large or small, have competing national interests and the common European interest does not always prevail. However, the membership is perceived as allowing a country to pursue more ambitious foreign policy objectives. EU membership has offered a new platform to defend the national interest, backed by the political and economic weight of the EU. In this case, the power nature of Europeanization is the 'power to', or Europeanization as empowerment. The EU member states have greater access to information, resources, and decisions than their own capabilities would allow (Jørgensen, 2004: 48-50). A country is no longer simply country x or y, it is a member of the EU (this is also true for NATO membership for instance). Besides, the EU membership offers a stronger standing on the international stage for a member state. Alongside this logic, small member states from Central and Eastern Europe might benefit from EU membership more than they might lose. Either way, the agreement on the existence of a

power dimension affects the process of socialization. The socialization stands for learning of new norms and rules and their instrumental use.

The primary instrumental view of the EU procedural norms and rules by the national representatives has some wider implications. One aspect is that the primary allegiance of national officials is towards the national interest (as defined in the capital). This is the most visible in situations where vital national interests are at stake. Among other striking examples, it is enough to recall the split within the EU caused by the United States' military intervention in Iraq in 2003, or the division of EU member states on the issue of Kosovo declaration of independence in 2008. Another aspect is that the national foreign policy is more influential with accession than before. Before accession, the EU membership was the first foreign policy priority of a CEE candidate. Once this fundamental goal was achieved, the order of priorities of the national foreign policy changed as well.

CHAPTER 7

EUROPEANIZATION OF FOREIGN POLICY CONDUCT

7.1. Introduction

This chapter turns the focus of analysis from institutions and identity to the conduct of foreign policy. As discussed in the conceptual chapter, Europeanization is the input (or set of inputs) originating at the EU level and affecting the national system of policy-making, either in terms of demands (constraints and pressures) or supports (opportunities) and requires the system to respond. This chapter examines the extent to which the national system of policy-making reacts to inputs coming from the external environment by looking at official discourse and policy conduct. Hence, as stated in the theoretical chapter, the two research questions this chapter examines are:

- a) To what extent do the officially stated foreign policy priorities and commitments, interests and the means to achieve them reflect a more salient European dimension after accession? and
- b) To what extent does the conduct of foreign policy reflect a preference for EU channels rather than using other national/international tools?

The discursive dimension refers to the way in which the national interest is defined in the official discourse, including both statements and speeches of policy-makers and official documents, such as governing programmes, security strategies and the like. In other words, the question is to what extent and how the definition of national interest changed over time (i.e throughout the period covering the two decades since the fall of communist regimes in Hungary, Slovakia and Romania, including the integration into NATO and the EU). It is important to examine the issue of interest since it is closely connected to national sovereignty and statehood. One of the fundamental interests of all

states is the preservation of their very statehood. Traditionally, foreign policy was the main device whereby the state promoted and defended the national interest (Jackson and Sørensen, 2007: 60). At the same time, the national interest itself is historically contingent and its definition changes over time. Insofar as European integration is the process whereby large chunks of national sovereignty are surrendered to a supranational entity, the definition of national interest is changing as well. What is the meaning given to the national interest by the new member states, which regained their independence only recently after decades of Soviet control? For the Czech Republic or Poland for instance, the Lisbon Treaty is perceived by certain high-level political figures as threatening and constraining the state's independence. In contrast, further integration towards a political union is seen by Hungary as a desired outcome. Therefore, it is important to examine the manner whereby the official discourse defines the relationship between national and common European interest, national and European foreign policy, the EU as a foreign policy actor and the preference for the EU over other international tools of conducting foreign policy.

The second research question is concerned with the practical conduct of the policy, the way in which various officially stated foreign policy priorities are pursued (e.g. what instruments and resources are employed and how). Since the discourse itself is a form of action, the distinction between the two is not a clear-cut one. To issue a foreign policy statement of approval or criticism means to act, to situate oneself, as a national decision-making body, in relation to others, to take a position; foreign policy action is the follow-up to discourse. The two aspects – discourse and action – should be linked for the sake of policy's internal coherence. On the contrary, to agree in the official discourse with, for instance, the need for stronger, better-integrated European-level institutions while at the

same time circumventing this aim by unilateral action suggests either inconsistency or malevolence.

I argue that with EU accession, the definition of national interest began to reflect a greater awareness of historical experiences than was the case before. This does not mean that historical experiences were forgotten before accession; it is simply the case that European integration overshadowed other policy objectives. The Europeanization process was more visible before than after accession. The institutional transformation was an important part of preparing the national administration to be fully able to assume the obligations of full membership. With accession, the institutional adjustments reflected even more the salience of internal politics. The ratification of the long delayed Lisbon Treaty already requires further institutional adjustments in the new member states, especially with regard to the setting-up at the EU level of the new European External Action Service (EEAS). On the other hand, the conduct of foreign policy was in general supportive with regard to the European foreign policy, but it ran occasionally against it when a choice had to be made between CFSP and the objective of NATO integration and support for US foreign policy. The chapter examines in more detail how the tension between the two sets of national objectives affected the conduct of foreign policy.

The first section of this chapter provides a general overview of the main features, choices and developments in the three countries throughout the period after the fall of the communist regimes. Historically, the CFSP evolved as a way to address the gap between the economic power of the EC/EU and its political weakness. The paradox is that a politically strong EU means further delegation of powers from the national to the supranational level that began to be perceived as constraining the room for manoeuvre of the member states. Hence, this chapter also examines the issue of whether the EU as a foreign policy actor is perceived in the new member states as either empowering or

weakening the state (or a mixture of both). This section also examines the issue of how the global reach of EU foreign policy fits with the mainly regional scope of foreign policy of the new member states.

The second section examines the shifting conception with regard to the objectives of foreign policy during the post-accession period. The major argument of this chapter is that after accession the foreign policy of the new member states has become more confident and focused on the pursuit of national interest, irrespective of the manner in which the national interest was perceived and defined. At the same time, the domestic political interests and demands represent key factors shaping national foreign policies and defining the contours and nature of European foreign policy itself. The definition of what is the national interest and how the foreign policy should promote it is a function of the political orientation of the governing coalition or party. The state bureaucracy provides the continuity in defining and implementing foreign policy, but it might be constrained by administrative reorganization and available resources. The combination of these two factors provides different pictures across countries, which are discussed in more detail throughout this chapter.

The third and fourth sections examine the three governments' positioning with regard to three critical events, which tested the extent to which EU was preferred over other foreign policy options. Hence, the third section looks at the issue of transatlantic relations, including the relationship between the EU and NATO. The reason for examining these two issues is due to the significance that NATO (and the US) has for the new member states. The future of the relationship between NATO and the EU is still a matter open to debate, not only in the new member states, but on both sides of the Atlantic. Similarly, the relationship between the United States and the EU is still a testing ground with regard to the Europeanness of the new member states. The transatlantic divide over

the war in Iraq was the most visible illustration with regard to the distinct preferences European countries hold, but the list of contentious issues is longer.

The fourth section examines the issue of Kosovo's independence from Serbia. It starts with a discussion about the NATO airstrikes against Yugoslavia in 1999 and the position of Hungary, Slovakia and Romania on this matter followed by an analysis of how the three countries reacted to the moment of Kosovo's declaring independence in 2008 and the implications of the EU attempts to forge a unified position. The Kosovo crisis is important for at least two reasons. First, it took place both before and after accession. It was, in fact, a continuum, spanning almost a decade. Hence, it provides a good opportunity to examine the foreign policy of the new member states (aspirants and candidates before) and their interaction with European foreign policy. Secondly, it was an important matter, stirring up political debate and testing the foreign policy capabilities of the new member states. The last section concludes and sums up the key findings.

7.2. Early foreign policy choices. Continuity and change of foreign policy before EU accession

The CEE countries made different foreign policy choices in the early 1990s, despite the fact that the external environment (i.e the end of the Cold War and the fall of the communist regimes) provided similar challenges and opportunities for all of them. Some countries, such as Hungary or Poland, chose to reform the state along the Western model of democracy and the free market, and sought assiduously integration into Western organizations. Other countries succumbed to the heavy burden of ethno-nationalism, like Yugoslavia. Czechoslovakia fell also victim to nationalist tendencies, especially Slovak nationalism, but differently from Yugoslavia or the Soviet Union; the separation of the Czech and Slovak republics took place in a smooth and amicable manner. After

independence, Slovakia has extensively relied upon the ethno-nationalist discourse and practices as part of the nation and state-building process. In other cases, such as Romania, the post-communist political forces were particularly concerned with internal political stability and consolidation of their own political position. The diversity of situations reflected the salience of domestic political conditions and circumstances over the external environment. The same diversity of local circumstances is visible in the way foreign policy was defined in the early 1990s.

In Hungary, three foreign policy objectives were initiated in 1990 by the right-wing coalition government centred on the MDF⁸⁶ enjoying large support across the entire political spectrum and remaining virtually unchanged on the agenda of all Hungarian governments since then (for a historical-comparative analysis of successive governmental programmes, see Varga, 2000). The first was the full integration into the Western European and Euro-Atlantic organizations, i.e. the EC/EU and NATO. The second priority area was a policy of good neighbourliness and regional cooperation. The third objective was to support ethnic Hungarians living abroad (interviews, Budapest; see also Póti and Tálas, 2004: 44, Rácz, 2005: 545, Rósz, 2003: 6, Törő, 2001: 129, Varga, 2000: 117). Even if the three priorities remained unchanged until accession, this does not mean that they really had the same weight under different administrations. While the objective of Euro-Atlantic integration enjoyed the equally strong support of the major political forces, the other two priorities reflected more the tension between the ideological preferences of the right versus left-wing parties (Magyarics, (2004: 217) (for more details, see the subsequent section).

⁸⁶ Hungarian Democratic Forum (MDF), Independent Smallholders' Party (FKFPP), and Christian Democratic Peoples' Party (KDNP, Kereszténydemokrata Néppárt) formed the centre-right coalition that won the election in 1990 and governed until 1994.

For Slovakia, as a newborn state, lacking a tradition of statehood, the major issue after the ‘Velvet Divorce’ was defining itself as a state with its own national interests, distinct from the interests of the former Czechoslovakia (Bitušíková, 2002: 41). The pro-West orientation was widely accepted as necessary, as well as a regional approach, concerned with building good relations with neighbourhood countries (Bombik and Samson, 1996: 152-3).⁸⁷ Even if Slovakia applied for NATO and EU membership in 1994 and 1995, the realignment with Western Europe’s political, economic and security organizations was only a rhetorical tool, not backed by appropriate policies (Bátora, 2004, Kukan, 2000). The governmental-sponsored nationalism, populism, and authoritarianism (see Bútorá, et al., 2003: 52, Carpenter, 1997: 212, Vachudová, 2005) were severely criticised by international actors⁸⁸ and proved an insurmountable obstacle on Slovakia’s path towards NATO and the EU. Only with the change of ruling coalition in 1998, replacing the Mečiar led coalition cabinet with that of Mikuláš Dzurinda (see also the chapter five, pp. 107-8), the objectives of European and Euro-Atlantic integration began to be pursued in a more determined manner, leading eventually to integration into NATO and the EU in 2004.

In Romania, the early foreign policy choices reflected the ideological preferences of the new political leadership. During 1990-1991, the foreign policy agenda of the National Salvation Front (FSN) was limited to two main aspects: relationships with the neighbouring countries and the fate of the Warsaw Pact. However, regional developments

⁸⁷ In the early 1990s, several other directions of foreign policy were discussed. The first one overplayed the card of geopolitical location, Slovakia being portrayed as a ‘bridge between East and West’. The second alternative was neutrality. The third choice referred to a ‘buffer zone’ Slovakia between Russia and Ukraine in the East and West European countries in the West.

⁸⁸ EU issued critical diplomatic statements, the so-called *démarches*, against Slovakia in November 1994 and again in October 1995. The European Parliament issued critical resolutions as well, in November 1995, December 1996 and October 1997, with regard to the misuse and abuse of power by the Mečiar regime, and calling on the government to respect human rights and the rule of law (European Commission, 1997b). The worsening record of the government was the subject of criticism of the US administration and other international bodies too.

proved crucial to a change of foreign policy orientation. One external development was the significant progress towards integration into NATO and the EU made by other countries in the region, leaving Romania in an undesirable position of exclusion.⁸⁹ Other critical factor was the conflict in the Western Balkans, which demonstrated that playing the ethno-nationalist card is anything but a recipe for disaster. The reorientation of foreign policy in the early 1990s towards the West was undertaken in a gradual and controlled manner so as not to jeopardize the fragile domestic equilibrium (Linden, 1992: 213). Although hesitant and sluggish, the change of Romanian foreign policy was marked by the signing of the Europe Agreement, the official application for NATO membership, in September 1993, and accession to the Council of Europe (CoE) in 1993.⁹⁰ In January 1994, Romania was the first of the CEE countries to enter the NATO Partnership for Peace programme, and in June 1995 became the third CEE country (after Hungary and Poland) to officially submit its application to join the EU.⁹¹ Romania joined NATO in 2004 and the EU in 2007.

The three countries examined here provide strong evidence with regard to the importance of domestic politics and preferences of competing political forces. In Hungary the objective of European and Euro-Atlantic integration was a source of cohesion binding together the major political parties. Instead, in Slovakia and Romania, under the leadership of Vladimir Mečiar and Ion Iliescu, this objective lacked genuine commitment, in spite of the official rhetoric and some formal decisions of changing the course of foreign policy.

The differences may be partially explained by looking at the ‘initial conditions’. The importance of the initial conditions (e.g. the legacy of 40 years of socialism) in shaping the post-communist transition of CEE in a completely different way to that of the states that

⁸⁹ This situation was similar to Slovakia, but the argument holds for Bulgaria too.

⁹⁰ Romania became a member of the Council of Europe later than the other Central European countries and in contrast to the Hungarian, Polish or Czechoslovak fast-track applications and admissions, without enjoying a full support of the members of CoE.

⁹¹ Agence France Presse, June 22, 1995, ‘Romania officially seeks EU membership.’

joined in the enlargements of 1973, 1981, 1986 and 1995 is well documented (see also Copsey and Haughton, 2009: 281-2).

The 'initial condition' approach also suggests that there is a direct link between the extent to which political competition was experienced during the final years of communism and the type of post-communist regime. Hungary had the most liberal regime, allowing for limited political debate and contestation, Czechoslovakia experienced a hard line regime, and Romania was an example of totalitarian regime, attempting to suppress any form of opposition. The result of these different contexts was that in Hungary, the political forces coming to power after the fall of the communist regime represented the democratic opposition, while in the case of Romania the new ruling elite was simply a dissident faction within the communist party, still sympathetic to the Soviet creed and semi-authoritarian rule. In the case of Czechoslovakia, the manner in which the two constituent republics chose to 'divorce', in the absence of a democratic pact between political elite and electorate, negatively affected the process of democratic consolidation in the independent Slovak Republic (Samson, 2001: 361).

Although this explanation does not provide the full picture, it still offers a starting point in understanding why there were differences between post-communist countries with regard to the direction of their foreign policies. At this stage, domestic politics played a more important role than the external factors. The way in which the ruling political forces understood the past, and perceived and interpreted the challenges and opportunities of the external environment had a decisive impact upon the early foreign policy choices. However, the balance between the influence of the domestic politics and the external factors changed during the integration process. The system of conditionality associated with the integration process limited the room for manoeuvre of national governments.

7.3. CFSP and national foreign policies

As discussed in the first empirical chapter, the Europe Agreements institutionalized political dialogue in foreign policy matters. Since 1995, the EU began inviting the associated countries to align their positions to those adopted by the Union. The scope of European foreign policy is wider than the traditional area of interest of the CEE countries. In fact, among the diplomats from CEE countries, the opinion that the scope of European foreign policy mirrors the interests of the former European colonial powers, mainly France and the UK, is rather common (various interviews, 2007-8; see also the previous chapter, pp. 169-70). The majority of the other member states have more limited interests, usually having a regional focus.⁹² However, the scope of national foreign policy of CEE countries widened since they ended up taking positions on remote matters, which previously had little or no direct significance for them, such as the EU statements on the Indian and Pakistani nuclear tests, the embargo concerning the supplying of weapons and military equipment to Ethiopia and Eritrea, or visa restrictions for the members of the military junta from Burma/Myanmar.

During the Europe agreements period (i.e. before opening of the accession talks), cooperation in foreign policy matters was, in general, limited to the endorsement by the associated countries of the EU's political declarations, common positions, and joint actions. The endorsement of EU positions was voluntary before the opening of the accession talks, since there was no formal mandatory requirement under the provisions of Europe agreements. However, the refusal to respond positively to an invitation from the

⁹² A good illustration of this point is the development of various projects of regional cooperation initiated by groups of member states within the EU framework: Southern members promoted the Barcelona Process, Scandinavian and Baltic countries pushed for Nordic and Baltic Sea projects, Poland and Sweden for a Eastern dimension of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP), Romania and Bulgaria for a Black Sea strategy.

EU might have incurred undesirable political costs. This arrangement was convenient for both sides in the sense that the associated countries could prove their commitment to European foreign policy and the political support of CEE countries enhanced the legitimacy of EU external action. With the opening of the accession talks, the candidate countries formally committed themselves to upholding EU foreign policy (see European Commission, 1997a, b, c). Before this moment, the alignment with EU positions was based on invitations addressed by the EU. By agreeing ‘to participate fully and actively in the Common Foreign and Security Policy’ (European Commission 1997a), the associated countries committed to behave like full-members without having yet this status.

The support was mainly political, without including the allocation of direct financial, material or human resources. As a Hungarian diplomat pointed out

‘...if you are asking whether the EU’s Burma policy has become also Hungary’s Burma policy, I would say yes. But if you ask what our contribution was, there was no contribution’ (interview, Brussels, 2007).

However, some of the restrictive measures adopted by the EU had indirect negative economic consequences, such as the oil embargo imposed against Yugoslavia. Romania and Hungary, as neighbouring countries affected, but also Slovakia, acted against their direct economic interest by upholding the EU position. Yet, the EU stance was in line with the UN sanctions imposed on Yugoslavia since 1991.⁹³ All three countries endorsed the UN resolutions on Yugoslavia in spite of the economic costs. The support for the EU position was the logical continuation of the endorsement of UN resolutions. With regard to the support of UN sanctions against Yugoslavia, the interest of CEE countries was the endorsement of international law. For small states or less influential countries, advancing the norms of the UN Charter is a key component of foreign policy. Therefore, not only the high importance allocated to the objective of European integration explains the trade-off

⁹³ Various resolutions of the UN Security Council between 1991 and 1996.

between the economic losses and the support for the EU position on Yugoslavia, but also the preferences for a stronger role of the United Nations and the upholding of the international law. The EU stance was seen as legitimate because it furthered and enforced the UN resolutions.

The formal opening and conduct of negotiation talks in the area of foreign policy was one of the easiest parts of the entire package of negotiations. All candidate countries, invited to join the EU in 1997 and 1999, provisionally concluded this chapter simultaneously, during the first half of 2000, during the Portuguese rotating presidency of the EU.⁹⁴ The peculiarity of the CFSP chapter (chapter 27)⁹⁵ rested on the fact that there is no legal instrument of the kind of directives or regulations, which make up the bulk of the proper *acquis communautaire*; there are only instruments belonging to the area of intergovernmental cooperation, such as joint actions, common positions, statements and declarations, the conclusions of the European Council and the Council of Ministers as well as temporary negative measures, in the form of sanctions for instance. In other words, in the field of foreign policy the opening of the accession talks represented only a continuation of the political dialogue and cooperation that had started with the Europe agreements. The smooth conclusion of this chapter was therefore facilitated by the previous experience that the associated countries had in dealing with the CFSP.

The setting up of the new European Security and Defence Policy, following the joint French-UK summit at St. Malo in December 1999, a key moment for the ESDP, was supposed to provide the long-awaited and badly-needed hard-power instruments to give substance to the CFSP. At the same time, the launch of the ESDP created a different type

⁹⁴ See

http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/archives/enlargement_process/future_prospects/negotiations/eu10_bulgaria_romania/chapters/chap_27_en.htm, viewed online 20th June 2009.

⁹⁵ There were 31 chapters corresponding to various areas of the European Community legislation that had to be transposed into national law by the candidate countries.

of challenge for policy planners in CEE capitals. Paradoxically, the challenge rested less on the fact that the support for ESDP ought to be material, in terms of military capabilities and troops, and not only political. The real challenge was related to the impact of this new policy on NATO and the role of the United States of America in Europe.

The reason why the material component of supporting the ESDP was less challenging (without saying that it was unimportant) than the political tension between the development of independent European military capabilities and the role of NATO in Europe, was because sending troops in peacekeeping missions abroad was nothing new for CEE countries. All three countries had the experience of sending military or civilian personnel under the UN, NATO, or OSCE aegis to the Balkans, Eastern Europe, Africa, the Middle East, or Asia-Pacific. Hungary sent troops from the early 1990s to the UN and OSCE missions in the Middle East, Africa, or the Caucasus. After independence, Slovakia found that participation in multinational missions increased its visibility on the international stage. For a new and small state, not yet benefiting from security guarantees of a military alliance such as NATO, the involvement in international missions in areas like the Balkans, Africa, or the Middle East was a way to express support for the norms of international law and order. Likewise, Romania had the experience of participating in international missions since April 1991, in the Middle East, Africa, and the Balkans. Certainly, the level of contribution is less important than the perception and understanding of how significant the role of international institutions is in preserving and enforcing the international law.

At the same time, the wide diversity of places where Hungary, Slovakia and Romania contributed troops to multinational missions does not mean that these countries had immediate interests in all those areas. Certainly, the resolution of conflicts in the Balkans or frozen conflicts in Eastern Europe is of greater interest for the three countries

than Somalia, Angola, Congo, Ethiopia-Eritrea, and Liberia. However, by participating in multinational peacekeeping missions outside their area of immediate concern the objective was to prove their commitment to international law and to present themselves as responsible actors of the international order. From this perspective, the involvement in the ESDP was seen by the candidate countries as a logical continuation of their existing commitment to participating in multinational missions under the UN or OSCE aegis.

Since ESDP became operational in 2003, all three countries have contributed forces to EU civilian and military operations in the Balkans, such as the EU Police Mission and Eufor Althea in Bosnia (since December 2004), or the military mission 'Concordia' and the police operation 'Proxima' in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. It is worth mentioning that Slovakia was the only associate country from CEE to contribute to the European Community Monitoring Mission in Western Balkans, as early as from January 1993. In operational terms, the ESDP has expanded significantly since 2003, in both numbers of missions, geographical coverage and diversity of instruments deployed, as well as the involvement of the new member states. The point here is not to provide a comprehensive account of the involvement of the three countries within the ESDP (for an overview of Hungarian, Slovak and Romanian contribution to the ESDP before the EU accession, see Rózsa, 2002, Bilčík, 2002, Călin, 2002), The aim is to illustrate the fact that the contribution of Hungary, Slovakia and Romania to the development of the ESDP was part of a broader process of assuming international responsibilities, either in terms of sending troops to peacekeeping operations or observers in monitoring missions. This experience, as well as the process of preparation for NATO membership, facilitated the decision to support the development of the ESDP, as long as it did not duplicate NATO.

The relationship between the EU and NATO was in fact the main challenge for policy makers in CEE capitals with regard to the position towards the evolving ESDP. At

the strategic level, the question was whether the ESDP was going to undermine the role of NATO as the main security provider in Europe or to push the US out of Europe. At the operational level, the controversy revolved around the problem of how the existing military capabilities are to be allocated in order to match the commitments made to both organizations. The position shared by all CEE countries was that in favour of complementarity between the two organizations and avoidance of parallelisms and duplications.⁹⁶ The fact that this view was also shared by some of the old member states, such as the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Italy or Spain makes the distinction between old and new members problematic. With regard to NATO-ESDP relations, what mattered was not the length of membership, but the national preferences in the field of foreign and security policy. Insofar as a strong NATO is associated with a strong involvement of the United States, the support for the US was seen as key for the promotion of the objective of accession in NATO and the maintenance of a strong NATO. Therefore, when the US decided to invade Iraq in 2003, the CEE countries found themselves in a difficult position, apparently being expected to choose between the US and Europe. This aspect is discussed in the next section of this chapter.

Insofar as NATO was seen as the primary guarantor of its members' security, the CEE countries considered any development of a competing European alternative to NATO unacceptable. According to the National Security Strategy of Hungary adopted in March 2004, right before accession,

'Hungary has a fundamental interest in NATO remaining the primary forum of transatlantic security policy dialogue and co-operation' and 'the main guarantee of the country's military security is provided by allied co-operation taking place in the framework of the North Atlantic Treaty' (Hungarian National Security Strategy, 2004).

⁹⁶ This position was in fact advocated by the US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright in a widely quoted article featured in the Financial Times in December 1998. She argued that the decoupling (of NATO and EU actions), duplication (of capabilities) and discrimination (of non-EU NATO members) had to be avoided.

On the other hand, the same document characterized the CFSP simply as an *'important framework'* of Hungarian foreign policy. The semantic distinction between *'fundamental'* and *'important'* reflected the degree to which NATO was preferred over the ESDP. For Slovakia, the preferences at the helm of the cabinet were best captured by foreign minister Kukan, who summarised the view that

'What Europe needs is not an independent defence policy for Europe, but a strong European defence as part of a strong North Atlantic Alliance' (Kukan, 2005: 88).

Romania's position was similar to that of Hungary or Slovakia, although it was more salient, being closer to Poland's strong pro-US approach, than Hungary's soft-Atlanticism (for Hungary, see Póti and Tálas, 2004). The National Security Strategy adopted in 2007, the year of Romania's accession to the EU, maintained the pre-eminence of NATO over the EU, the North Atlantic Alliance being defined as the fundamental provider of collective security for its members.

7.4. The redefinition of the national interest after EU accession

The accession of CEE countries in the EU completed a historical cycle throughout which the achievement of membership in Western organizations, especially NATO and the EU, was the fundamental foreign policy priority. However, the accession did not represent a sharp break with the past. Most of previous foreign policy priorities remained the same, although the means of achieving them changed. The shared perception and understanding by the political elite of the new status changed too. This phenomenon was not completely new, a similar cognitive transformation occurring in the aftermath of NATO accession. The long-sought NATO membership did not only offer formal security guarantees and a sense of belonging, but the perception of importance and respectability, as well as

responsibility towards the allies, partners and the projection of the organization's objectives in the world. EU accession augmented these feelings.

At the same time, the accession released the burden of conditionality characterizing the pre-accession period. Beforehand, the policy-makers from the candidate countries knew that there was only a thin line between the rewards for compliance with the external conditionality and the punishment for disobedience. The cases such as the transatlantic rift over the Iraq war made the line vague, difficult to decide how to behave in order to satisfy the expectations of both the US administration and the EU. Had a candidate sided with one party against the other, it would have run the risk of incurring the wrath of the other party when crossing the line. This was the case of the decision of Romanian authorities to side with the US on the issue of non-surrender of military personnel to the ICC. The problematic transatlantic relationship or the dynamic of conjunctural, issue-based alliances of member states within the EU posed similar challenges after accession. This happened fairly frequently and the new member states had to take sides according to their own (self-perceived) interests, on issues such as Kosovo's declaration of independence, external energy policy and so on. The difference from the previous period, however, is that the room for manoeuvre was greater and the concern was no longer about the danger that the accession process might be delayed or derailed, but about what was the best or a fair deal for the country and for the other member states.

In Hungary, after the parliamentary election in 2002, political power was held by the socialist-liberal coalition (MSzP plus SzDSz). The direct consequence was that the ideological preferences were consistent throughout the last seven years, even if three changes of the position of prime minister and four at the foreign ministry helm occurred

during this period.⁹⁷ Against this background, the post-accession thinking on foreign policy matters was derived from the political directions drawn up during 2002-2004, under the guidance of the foreign minister László Kovács. Two factors may explain why this happened. On the one hand, it was the political stature of László Kovács and his experience in foreign policy matters. He was chairman of the Hungarian Socialist Party during 1998-2004 and foreign minister during 1994-1998. At the same time, Prime Minister Medgyessy was not a member of the party, his influence being limited in this respect. On the other hand, Ferenc Gyurcsány, the new prime minister appointed from the party's ranks in 2004 to replace Medgyessy, had even more limited experience in foreign policy matters. Besides, Ferenc Somogyi, the new foreign minister in Gyurcsány's cabinet, was proposed for this position by the outgoing minister,⁹⁸ who went to Brussels as Hungarian European Commissioner for Taxation during 2004-2009. At the time of the cabinet investiture, Gyurcsány declared that '*Continuity will be the decisive factor of foreign and security policies in coming years*' while being highly appreciative about what has been done under Kovács's leadership.⁹⁹

During the post-accession period, the previous foreign policy priorities as well as the balance between NATO and the EU in Hungary's foreign policy were revised. The new conceptual approach is reflected in the new 'Hungary's External Relations Strategy',¹⁰⁰ adopted by the cabinet in 2008. The document was completed four years after EU accession; it may seem a long incubation period, even if the timing dedicated to the

⁹⁷ In terms of changes of the position of prime minister, Ferenc Gyurcsány took over in 2004 from Peter Medgyessy, and Gordon Bajnai in 2009 from Gyurcsány. In terms of foreign minister, the four incumbent were László Kovács (2002 –2004), Ferenc Somogyi (2004-.2006), Kinga Göncz (2006 -2009) and Péter Balázs between April 2009 and May 2010.

⁹⁸ BBC Monitoring Europe, November 5, 2004, 'Hungary's new foreign minister outlines policy changes'.

⁹⁹ Hungarian News Agency (MTI), September 2, 2004, 'PM-designate advocates continuity in foreign and security policy'.

¹⁰⁰ Hungary's External Relations Strategy, online http://www.kulugyminiszterium.hu/kum/en/bal/foreign_policy/external_relations_strategy/, accessed on May 2008..

elaboration of the document, including a wide-ranging reconciliation process, lasted about a year.¹⁰¹ As Péter Balázs put it, during the first years after accession, not only Hungary but other new member states as well experienced the syndrome of losing direction and the purpose of foreign policy (interview, Budapest, 2008). It was difficult to move from an understanding whereby the European and Euro-Atlantic integration were key objectives of foreign policy to realizing that, once a full EU member, it is increasingly difficult to clearly separate foreign and domestic politics and policies. Nonetheless, the new strategy placed greater emphasis on the EU, underlining the fact that

‘The European Union is the most important framework for Hungarian policy and action’ and that the ‘EU external relations are also Hungary’s external relations’ (Hungary’s External Relations Strategy’, 2008).

This understanding departs significantly from the formulation of the 2004 Security Strategy, and it establishes a direct link between the EU and Hungary’s foreign affairs. When it comes to the role of NATO, the emphasis is placed on EU-NATO cooperation, although the role of the Alliance as a security guarantor in terms of traditional military threats is made evident.

During the post-accession stage, the new strategic objectives of foreign policy, as highlighted in the Hungarian External Relations Strategy of 2008, envisaged the creation of a ‘competitive Hungary in the EU’, ‘successful within the region’ and ‘responsible in the world.’ The main framework for achieving these strategic objectives is provided by EU membership. There are significant differences between these strategic goals and the previous triad of policy objectives characterizing Hungarian foreign policy during the post-communist period until after EU accession, namely European and Euro-Atlantic integration, good neighbourliness and regional cooperation and the support of ethnic

¹⁰¹ Topics of the press conference following the government session on 27 February 2008: Foreign relations strategy proposal before government, online http://www.meh.hu/english/activities/briefing/an_20080228.html, accessed July 2009.

Hungarians living abroad. The goal of creating a competitive Hungary within the EU replaced the overarching aim of European and Euro-Atlantic integration. The goal of a successful Hungary in the region superseded the previous objectives of good neighbourly relations and the support for Hungarian minorities abroad. Finally, the objective of creating a Hungary responsible in the world took the place and expanded the previous objective of regional cooperation. In other words, four years after joining the EU, the fact that the EU is defined as the main framework for the conduct of Hungary's foreign policy reflects the ever-growing salience of European affairs at the domestic level and corresponds to a more Europeanized set of foreign policy preferences.

In Slovakia, the major foreign policy priorities of the second Dzurinda cabinet (2002-2006)¹⁰² were, initially, the finalisation of the accession process to NATO and the EU. After accession, however, according to premier Dzurinda, the foreign policy priorities of Slovakia should concentrate at the regional level (the Balkans, Ukraine, Russia) as well as the Trans-Caucasian and Central Asian regions (Dzurinda, 2003). It is not surprising that Ukraine and the Western Balkan countries were declared foreign policy priorities of Slovakia after EU accession, and that Slovakia wanted to be the advocate of these states' integration in NATO and the EU (Dzurinda, 2004).

The new ruling coalition forming the government after the 2006 elections returned to power the ĽS-HDZS and SNS as junior partners of Robert Fico's SMER. Inevitably, the ethnic-national ideological polarisation of political preferences that was so divisive during the elections played an important role after the cabinet was installed. The more nationalistic ideology of the new cabinet affected foreign policy too. While the long-term direction of foreign policy, already laid out by the outgoing cabinet (e.g. Western Balkans

¹⁰² The second Dzurinda coalition cabinet entered into office in November 2002. It was composed of SDKÚ (Slovak Democratic and Christian Union), SMK (Party of Hungarian Coalition), KDH (Christian Democratic Movement) and ANO (New Citizen's Alliance).

and Ukraine, accession to the Schengen area, and the adoption of the Euro) remained unchanged, other dimensions began to be approached from a different perspective (e.g. the bilateral relations with Hungary).

Even if the major direction of foreign policy remained unchanged, the emphasis on national interest turned out to be more salient compared with the previous period. The political programme of the new government stressed the fact that '*The foreign policy (...) shall proceed consequentially from the State interests...*' and with this aim in mind the government aimed to make full use of its membership of international organizations (EU, NATO, UN, OSCE, Council of Europe and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development-OECD). The shift is also visible in the newly adopted foreign policy strategy bearing the title 'A Successful Slovakia in a Safe World. A Strategy of the Slovak Ministry of Foreign Affairs', adopted in 2008.¹⁰³ There is a reversal between the pre-accession formulation, when the national interest itself was defined as the achievement of membership in these organizations, and post-accession, when the national interest is understood more narrowly and instrumentally. The government led by Robert Fico placed more emphasis on the national card and the pursuit of national interest within the EU (and other international fora). The government became more assertive, pragmatic and less open to external criticism. One visible illustration of the new approach was the stance Slovakia took within the EU and in relation to the US with regard to the Kosovo declaration of independence (see later this chapter).

Romania joined the EU about two and a half years later than Hungary and Slovakia. Although the Romanian government considered accession on time as a tremendous success, the fact is that accession was uncertain until the last moment. The accession treaty, signed in Luxembourg on 25th April 2005, included a safeguard clause, which might

¹⁰³ A Successful Slovakia in a Safe World. A Strategy of the Slovak Ministry of Foreign Affairs', online <http://www.mzv.sk>, accessed on May 2008.

have led to the postponement for up to one year of the date of accession in case Romania had been unable to address the shortcomings in several areas of the *acquis*.¹⁰⁴ The European Commission published three more monitoring reports on Romania's progress, even after the Accession treaty had been signed. Each of these reports had been a source of anxiety for the Romanian government, not least because the ratification process was underway and some member states were not convinced that Romania was fully prepared (see Phinnemore, 2010: 302-3).¹⁰⁵ Moreover, the European Commission decided in December 2006, on the eve of Romania's accession, to introduce a special 'cooperation and verification mechanism' (CVM) in order to improve the accountability and efficiency of the judicial system and law enforcement bodies (European Commission, 2006). At stake was the possibility that, unless Romania addressed the abovementioned shortcomings, the EU member states do not have to recognize and execute the judgments and judicial decisions issued by Romanian courts.

The introduction of the mechanism theoretically had the potential to limit the full use of membership. Certainly, from a narrow, legal-formal, point of view, there was no direct link between the conduct of foreign policy and the monitoring by the European Commission of the Romanian government in the fields of judicial reform and fight against corruption (interview, Bucharest, 2008). In spite of this, the very existence of the mechanism placed Romania in the category of a second-class member, which negatively affected the prestige and credibility of the country. In general, the officials discourse did not refer to the mechanism as a constraining factor affecting Romania's position within the

¹⁰⁴ The areas of the *acquis* concerned were related to competition, Schengen area and external borders, the reform police and judiciary, fight against corruption, state aid, and a steel restructuring programme.

¹⁰⁵ Germany, for instance, was the very last country to ratify the treaty, at the end of November 2006, after the last (favourable) report of the European Commission, issued in September 2006.

EU. Various statements of President Bănescu addressed to the Romanian diplomatic corps on several occasions made no connection between the two aspects.¹⁰⁶

On the contrary, with accession the tone of the official discourse became more assertive, despite the existence of the CVM. Even if no new major objective was introduced, the order of priorities changed and a stronger emphasis was placed on the strategic priorities of Romanian foreign policy. The change in emphasis was most visible on the following strategic objectives: the relationships with the Republic of Moldova, the policy towards the Black Sea, and the role of Romania itself on the European and international stage. What remained unchanged, however, was the reference to the key role of the US and NATO for European security.¹⁰⁷

7.5. The 2003 Iraq war: the first test case for the Europeanization of foreign policy of CEE countries

As previously mentioned, the US decision to invade Iraq without the UN Security Council's green light was a major instance when the countries aspiring to join NATO¹⁰⁸ and the EU found themselves in the awkward position of choosing between the US-led camp and the 'core' Europeans (i.e. France and Germany), to use the term coined by Jürgen Habermas and Jacques Derrida, in the famous rejoinder to Donald Rumsfeld's distinction between 'old' and 'new' Europe (Habermas and Derrida, 2003: 292).

The context in which this decision was adopted is important. Although Hungary and Slovakia completed the accession talks in 2002, the Accession Treaty was yet to be ratified by the EU member states. In the case of Romania, the accession talks were still underway

¹⁰⁶ Various speeches of the President of Romania, Traian Bănescu at the meetings with Romanian diplomatic corps and the heads of foreign diplomatic missions in Bucharest (19 January and 3 September 2007, 23 January 2008 and 21 January 2009), available online at http://www.presidency.ro/index.php?_RID=.

¹⁰⁷ Romania's National Security Strategy, October 30, 2003 and The National Security Strategy of Romania of 2007.

¹⁰⁸ Except the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland, already members of NATO.

and accession itself uncertain. There were voices in the French media according to which the CEE countries were said to be 'unsuitable' to enter the EU due to their commitment to US foreign policy.¹⁰⁹ Moreover, the harsh remarks of the French President, Jacques Chirac, criticizing the CEE countries for their overt Atlanticism could not do anything but contribute to the state of nervousness in the candidate countries' capitals with regard to the possible negative consequences of siding with the US. At the same time, the rift between the old member states was a factor that offered more room for manoeuvre for the CEE countries. If a unified position opposing the war in Iraq had emerged at the EU level, the pro-US position of the candidate countries would have been more difficult to uphold. The fact that a consistent group of Western European countries were also in favour of US intentions made the stance of CEE countries more palatable, although not in France or Germany. On the other hand, while Hungary was already a full member of NATO, Slovakia and Romania received the invitation to join the Alliance only at the Prague Summit in November 2002. The visit of US president George Bush to Bucharest in November 2002, days after the NATO summit in Prague, was interpreted as recognition and reward for the loyalty of the Romanian government. Similar reasons seemed to have played an important role in the Slovak decision to side with the US as well. For Slovakia and Romania, as well as the other five countries invited to join the Alliance in 2004 (Slovenia and the Baltic States), especially due to the US position within NATO, it would have been politically risky not to be part of the 'coalition of the willing' and support the US position.

Although all three countries examined here found themselves embroiled in the transatlantic rift, the internal political debate reflected local peculiarities. In Hungary, the idea of having to choose between the US and Europe was distasteful for both the

¹⁰⁹ Czech News Agency, February 12, 2003, 'Slovak Press Survey.'

government and the opposition, insofar as both were considered important for Hungarian interests. This situation resulted in an ambiguous position, trying both to offer satisfaction to the US and appease the Western countries opposed to war (Bugajski and Teleki, 2006: 129). Following the official request from the British ambassador in Budapest,¹¹⁰ Hungarian Prime Minister Medgyessy joined the group of leaders from Poland, the Czech Republic, the UK, Italy, Spain, Portugal, and Denmark and signed a statement of support for the US intentions to attack Iraq, also known as the Letter of Eight, even without a UN Security Council resolution.¹¹¹ On the other hand, foreign minister László Kovács tried to soothe Paris and Berlin by declaring that *'more of Europe does not mean less of America'*,¹¹² as an assurance of Hungary's commitment to European integration and further development of the EU's foreign policy.

The political decision to side with the pro-US camp was contested by the opposition parties in Hungary, with FIDESZ accusing the government of irresponsibility and servility.¹¹³ The dispute between the government and opposition revolved more around the issue of sending Hungarian soldiers to fight as part of the US 'coalition of the willing' in Iraq. FIDESZ insisted that without a UN resolution, Hungarian soldiers should not go to Iraq as combat forces, but only as peacekeeping, and that the government should not bypass the Parliament in this regard. Public disapproval in Hungary for US action in Iraq without a UN mandate was very high, with over 80% being against it (Gordon and Shapiro, 2004: 79). When the government asked for the Parliament's approval to send 300 troops to Iraq as a peacekeeping force, following Washington's request in April 2003, FIDESZ blocked this request, although in other declarations the leaders of the Opposition

¹¹⁰ InfoProd, February 3, 2003, 'Hungarian premier defends European leaders' letter on Iraq.'

¹¹¹ Agence France Presse, January 30, 2003, 'Verbatim text of letter from eight European states supporting US..

¹¹² European Report, April 18, 2003, 'European Council: Enlarged Europe divided over institutional reforms.'

¹¹³ BBC Monitoring Europe, February 4, 2003, 'Hungarian premier explains signing letter of "eight" on Iraq.'

were in favour of fighting in the war against terror (Bugajski and Teleki, 2006: 145-6). Only after the UN Security Council adopted resolution 1483, the Hungarian Parliament approved the deployment of 300 peacekeepers in Iraq as part of the international stabilisation force.¹¹⁴

The Slovak government endorsed the US intention to intervene against Saddam Hussein's regime, in spite of the widely contested legitimacy of this decision. The Dzurinda government decided to allow overflights and landings of US aircrafts and to deploy a radiation, chemical and biological protection unit in Kuwait (Mesežnikov, 2004: 43). It also signed the common political declaration of support for the US military action in Iraq, the so-called Vilnius Letter, on 6th February, a few days after the Letter of Eight was made public. With ten more Central and East European countries¹¹⁵ siding with US, the European hopes for a unified position completely vanished. The choice to support the US was greatly helped by the pro-Atlantic views of the holders of key positions in the government, namely the prime minister, the foreign and defence ministers, all members of the SDKÚ, as well the support of the president (Samson, 2005: 229). Similar to Hungary, public disapproval of the government decision was high. According to opinion polls data, about 74% of the public considered that military action was wrong, 71% disliked the Slovak military presence in Iraq, 73% feared that the Iraq war would actually increased the terrorist threat, and 72% disapproved of the way in which the Bush administration handled international politics. At the same time, in terms of transatlantic relations, an overwhelming majority of the public considered the EU as more important for the vital Slovak interests and preferred it to the US; hence, the EU should become more

¹¹⁴ http://www.mfa.gov.hu/kum/en/bal/foreign_policy/security_policy/hungary_in_nato/hungary_role_in_iraq/, accessed on July 2009.

¹¹⁵ Albania, Bulgaria, Croatia, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Macedonia, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia.

independent from the US (54%) and acquire more military power (66%) (Institute for Public Affairs, 2004).

The gap between the public perception and the preferences of the leading members of the governing coalition is symptomatic of the fact that pro-Atlantic foreign policy-making in Slovakia was an elite-driven process, with little or no connection with the general preferences of the public, which tends to be more pro-European, including in terms of preferring the EU's soft-power approach to foreign policy business. At the same time, foreign policy is generally not a matter of utmost importance for the general public (not only in Slovakia). As Robert Cooper (2004: 102-13) explained, what comes first is domestic politics, while usually foreign policy is the external reflection of domestic politics. The performance of the government is especially judged in terms of job creation, social security, and citizens' welfare and less on foreign policy decisions. In the case of Slovakia, the causes of public apathy are due to the fact that foreign policy making during the first years after independence was a remote process from the citizens, not communicated and explained to the wider public enough (Gyárfášová and Velšic, 2000).

In Slovakia, the foreign policy matter most likely to stir up greater public interest is linked to the dynamic of bilateral relations with Hungary, as the political controversy on the adoption in 2002 of the Hungarian Status Law demonstrated. Indeed, this is due to the substantive Magyar ethnic community in Slovakia, hence a domestic concern with external repercussions. Besides, in contrast to other European countries, the Slovak public tends in general to be more isolationist and distant from the outside world (Institute for Public Affairs, 2004: 6). Therefore, what seemed to be an unpopular decision was in fact less important for the everyday concerns of Slovaks than different survey findings may suggest. This situation, coupled with the determination of several key high-level decision-makers to support the US in the war in Iraq, explains why the government felt free to pursue an

apparently unpopular course of action. Besides, the Dzurinda government emerged from the parliamentary elections that had taken place a few months earlier with enough capital of legitimacy and public support to afford the political costs of this decision. Within the coalition cabinet, the preferences of only one party, the Christian Democratic Movement, differed, but not to such an extent as to prevent the government from pursuing the course it desired.

In the case of Romania, the incumbent social-democrat government felt that integration in NATO might be helped by a more active pro-US approach. The war on terror started by the US, following the terrorist attacks on 9/11, was seen as an opportunity to further Romania's foreign policy goals, especially given the fact that the geographical position of the country became an element of interest for the US Middle East strategy. Accordingly, the Supreme Council of National Defence (CSAT, Consiliul Suprem de Apărare a Țării), which is the higher authority in security and defence matters, decided to accept the US's request and to deploy in the first instance 278 troops, including those specializing in nuclear, biological and chemical decontamination, de-mining, as well as military police and medical assistance.¹¹⁶ At the end of May 2003, the Romanian authorities decided to increase the contribution to the multinational force in Iraq up to about 700 troops in total. According to national legislation, both decisions had to be approved by the Parliament. In both cases, the Parliament endorsed the request of the government with an overwhelming majority. The only political party that opposed sending troops to Iraq was the nationalist Greater Romania Party (PRM), which refused to participate in the vote in the Parliament. The support for the US position mirrored therefore the preference of both the governing party and the political parties in the Opposition. This

¹¹⁶ Supreme Council of National Defence, Press Communiqué, 10th February 2003, online http://www.presidency.ro/?_RID=det&tb=date_arhiva&id=3559&_PRID=arh, accessed on July 2009; Associated Press Worldstream, February 12, 2003, 'Romania to contribute troops to possible Iraq war.'

fact explains why the change of government following the elections in 2004 did not alter the Romanian policy of supporting US policy in Iraq (and Afghanistan).

In terms of public opinion, the attitude of the public was not overtly against supporting the US action even without a UN resolution. Besides, different from Slovakia, the support for participation in international peacekeeping missions is higher in Romania, up to about a half of those surveyed in 2005, although in terms of what objectives are to be achieved there is a greater support for providing food and medical assistance to war victims than to stop a civil war or to remove a dictator by military means (Voinescu and Dobre, 2005: 27). At the same time, public opinion in Romania (and this is not different from those in other European countries) does not attach too much importance to foreign policy. Domestic concerns prevail here as well as in other countries, a fact that increases the space for manoeuvre for the government.

The pro-Atlantic position of Romania presents some differences from other CEE countries. Although all of them are, to varying degrees, pro-Atlanticist, probably Poland and Romania were, in the aftermath of Iraq crisis, seen as the most supportive of US foreign policy, due also to the level of their contribution to supporting US efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan. However, the pro-US position of the Romanian government became even more obvious (and controversial) during the debate over the setting up of the International Criminal Court (ICC). The role and jurisdiction of the Court was a matter of overwhelming consensus amongst the member and candidate states, reflected in the adoption of several common positions¹¹⁷ and in the reference made to its importance in the European Security Strategy of 2003. The Romanian government's decision to sign an agreement exempting

¹¹⁷ See the Common Position 2001/443/CFSP on the International Criminal Court, reviewed and reinforced by Common Position 2002/474/CFSP, and Common Position 2003/444/CFSP. An Action Plan has been also adopted in February 2004 to implement the Common Positions. Accessed on July 2009, online <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/showPage.aspx?id=404&lang=en>.

U.S. soldiers on its territory from the jurisdiction of the ICC fractured the united front of the EU and received harsh criticism by the EU. The European Commission stated that

‘Regrettably, this decision was taken without adequate prior consultation with the EU. It does not comply with the guiding principles laid down by the Council on 30 September 2002’ (European Commission, 2002c).

It is true that all the other candidate countries, including Hungary and Slovakia, were facing the same dilemma: either to uphold the EU common position or to side with the US and to endanger military and economic aid, perhaps even the chance to join the Alliance (for those countries that were still seeking admission). These countries, including transatlanticist Poland, refused to grant special treatment to US personnel. Romania was explicitly asked to side with the EU common position 2003/444/CFSP. Caught between the EU and the US, Romania indefinitely postponed the agreement’s ratification by the parliament, until a compromise was reached between the EU and United States.¹¹⁸

Referring to the differences in transatlantic relations, foreign minister Mircea Geoană argued that the ICC is more about approach and tactics than substance and strategic vision. In other words, he downplayed the existence of any substantive difference between the position adopted by Romania and that of the other European countries. It may be true that the Romanian authorities tried to gain as much as possible from a ‘privileged’ relationship with the US, while attempting not to stir up too much trouble in Brussels. The result, however, was not the one expected, a fact made evident by the criticism in the European Commission’s reports. Besides, the suspension of military aid to Hungary and Slovakia (and the other countries which did not comply with the US request) was only temporary, and the accession of Slovakia to NATO was not jeopardized at all. On the other hand, the position adopted by the other CEE countries demonstrated that, in spite of their preference

¹¹⁸ BBC Monitoring Europe, September 16, 2002, Statement of Romanian foreign minister, Mircea Geoană.

for a strong US involvement in European security, they are also committed to the EU's foreign policy.

This approach compensated to a certain extent for the dissident stance during the Iraq war. On the other hand, Romania found itself isolated on this matter and suspected of a lack of commitment to European foreign policy. Moreover, the position of Romania showed inconsistency between the formally claimed support for the universal norms of international law and the exceptions from these norms in certain cases (based on strategic, instrumental or conjunctural reasons). It also illustrated the conditionality power of the EU, even in the case of the intergovernmental field of foreign policy, which compelled Romania to take a compromising position between the two sides and to avoid ratifying the bilateral agreements with the US, while formally upholding the EU common position.

7.6. Kosovo independence: the second test-case for Europeanization of foreign policy of CEE countries

This section examines the foreign policies of Hungary, Slovakia, and Romania with regard to the Kosovo issue against the background of European integration. The first major challenge for the three countries with regard to Kosovo was in 1999, when they had to prove their commitment to the objective of NATO integration by providing support for the North Atlantic Alliance's military action against Yugoslavia. At this stage, only Hungary was a (new) member of NATO, while Slovakia and Romania were still aspiring countries. From the point of view of their status in relation to the EU, only Hungary had been given the green light for opening the accession talks. The second major challenge occurred nine years later, when Kosovo declared unilateral independence from Serbia. By this time, all three countries were full members of both NATO and the EU. The question is whether membership made any difference in the external behaviour of CEE states. The selection of

the two Kosovo-related events was justified by the fact that they occurred both before and after accession; hence, it allows for examining the foreign policy behaviour of CEE countries both as candidates and full-members and see whether the change in their status indicates a more Europeanized foreign policy.

i) *The 1999 NATO military intervention in Yugoslavia*

In all three countries examined here, the political forces in government were of centre-right orientation. In Hungary, the Orbán government came to power in May 1998, replacing the socialist government of Gyula Horn. The foreign political orientation did not change the previously defined three major objectives, namely European and Euro-Atlantic integration, good neighbourly relations and the policy towards kin-Hungarians abroad, but it emphasised the third over the second objective. The relevance of the internal political context in Hungary is that the major concern for Hungarian government in 1999 was the fate of ethnic Hungarians living in Vojvodina rather than the nature of bilateral relations with its Southern neighbour.

The launch of NATO airstrikes against Yugoslavia in March 1999 overlapped with the date when Hungary became officially a member of the Alliance. Hungary was expected to behave like a full member, despite its reluctance to enter a state of war with a neighbour, which is also the host country of 300,000 ethnic Hungarians (in Vojvodina, northern Yugoslavia). The concerns were related, on the one hand, to the potential danger that the NATO bombardments might accidentally hit the areas inhabited by ethnic Hungarians in Vojvodina, and on the other hand, to the potential retaliatory actions by the Serb army against ethnic Hungarians (interviews Brussels and Budapest 2007-8). Besides, Hungary was the only NATO member to have a common border with Yugoslavia, a fact that made the position of the Hungarian government more complicated.

In spite of these concerns, the Hungarian Parliament approved the opening of air space and territory to NATO forces by an overwhelming majority.¹¹⁹ Several reasons explain why this decision was eventually taken. The ultranationalist policies pursued by the Milošević regime, targeting ethnic minorities, were seen with hostility in Hungary, not only due to the concern over the fate of Hungarian minority in Vojvodina, but because it was seen as an unacceptable policy when it comes to the issue of ethnic minority rights. Such a position reflects the sensitiveness of Hungarian politicians on this matter. The appalling record of the Slobodan Milošević regime was a strong argument that prompted the Hungarian government to support NATO action not against Yugoslavia, but against Milošević himself.

At the same time, the position of the government converged with the views of public opinion that was highly supportive of this decision, with 60% in favour of NATO intervention. However, as the conflict advanced, there were growing fears about the danger of Hungary being sucked into an undesired war with its Southern neighbour. Two-thirds of the public was against launching attacks on Yugoslavia from Hungarian soil and even more opposed the use of Hungarian troops in ground offensives or peacekeeping missions.¹²⁰ Even so, the Hungarian Parliament approved sending 350 troops to join the 50,000 international peacekeeping force in Kosovo as of July 1999.

In Slovakia, the parliamentary elections taking place in September 1998 were won by an anti-Mečiar and pro-Western coalition against the background of public discontent with the increased international isolation of Slovakia. The catching-up strategy of the new government meant that the most important objective was to make visible steps towards integration in NATO and the EU, even if the reform was unpopular. In other words, the

¹¹⁹ BBC Monitoring Europe, March 30, 1999, 'Hungary: Parliamentary parties, even far-right, back NATO action in Yugoslavia.'

¹²⁰ <http://www.gallup.hu/english.htm#EURB>, accessed on July 2009.

main priority was to recover lost ground in the competition with the other Visegrad countries, which fared better with regard to European and Euro-Atlantic integration. The catching-up strategy explains why the government was overtly supportive of NATO airstrikes in Yugoslavia despite the fact that its actions collided with popular feelings (as well as with the isolationist views of the opposition parties). The support to NATO action was even more politically costly due to the public opinion feelings concerning the Alliance. Different from the issue of European integration, which was less contentious, the question of NATO membership was more divisive for Slovak society. While in January 1999, only few months after the elections, the question of NATO membership enjoyed almost similar levels of support and disapproval (42% in favour and 41% against), after the military intervention of the Alliance in Yugoslavia support dramatically dropped to 35% while the anti-integrationist camp peaked at 53% and remained higher until August 2000. At the same time, over 64% of the population considered that NATO's action was wrong or completely wrong (Gyárfášová and Velšic, 2000: 6-7).

Despite growing popular discontent, the government, backed by the Parliament, agreed to open up national airspace and territory for NATO forces. This position had domestic political consequences, since Vladimir Mečiar exploited the popular discontent with the governmental position on this matter during the presidential campaign against Rudolf Schuster, the candidate of the ruling coalition, in 1999. Although the prerogatives of the president are largely ceremonial, the direct vote provides the president with strong legitimacy and political stature (Malová and Ucen, 2000: 516). Hence, it may offer a platform for supporting or obstructing the pro-Western orientation of the government. Eventually, Rudolf Schuster, who secured 57% of the votes, won the election, in the second round, furthering the pro-Western agenda of the government. The position to support NATO airstrikes in Yugoslavia, alongside all the other required preparation and

the operational contribution to NATO's crisis management operations in the Western Balkans, eventually paid off. At the Alliance Summit in Prague, Slovakia was invited to join the organization in 2004.

In Romania, the popularity of the centre-right coalition centred on the Democratic Convention of Romania,¹²¹ in power since late 1996, was already in decline. The unpopular measures of internal reform to advance the objective of European integration, coupled with the persistent inter-coalition conflict, corruption and political-administrative incoherence eroded the legitimacy and credibility of the government. Against this background, the decision to support NATO's action in Yugoslavia was considered an important chance to demonstrate to the West European countries and the US that Romania was a credible and determined candidate to European and Euro-Atlantic integration.

Since the early 1990s, when the breaking-up of the former Yugoslavia began, the war and international embargos over Yugoslavia had deep negative consequences for the Romanian economy. However, there was also a positive side: it presented Romania with the opportunity of assuming, in the official discourse, the role of the 'island of stability' and contributor to security in the region (Gallagher, 1997). In contrast to the conflict-torn Yugoslavia, Romania (as well as Bulgaria and Hungary) benefited from internal stability and was able and willing to contribute troops to NATO's peacekeeping mission in Bosnia and especially in 1999 during the military intervention against Serbia (Gallagher, 2005: 213). Similar to Slovakia, Romania's endorsement of NATO's military operation, despite its unpopularity at the domestic level,¹²² was judged a key factor in the attempt of the

¹²¹ Besides CDR, the coalition cabinet also included the National Liberal Party (PNL), the Social Democratic Union (USD, Uniunea Social Democrată) and, for the first time, the Democratic Union of Hungarians in Romania (UDMR).

¹²² Ziua, April 27, 1999, '56,9% dintre romani vor categoric in NATO.' (56,9% of Romanians strongly wants in NATO) <http://www.ziua.net/display.php?id=23994&data=1999-04-27>, viewed online August 2009.

centre-right governmental coalition to secure integration into the Alliance¹²³ (Fawn, 2001, The Independent International Commission on Kosovo, 2000: 242-5). Even if the support for NATO's air campaign against Serbia in 1999 did not lead to an immediate invitation to join the Alliance, it played a major role in the decision taken by the Helsinki European Council in December 1999 to invite Romania to open accession talks for EU membership (Gallagher, 2005, Pridham, 2007: 356).

Although all three countries supported NATO's military intervention in Yugoslavia, there were striking differences between them. While in Hungary the governmental support for NATO's intervention was a consequence of being a member of NATO and having to behave as such, Slovakia and Romania provided their support while expecting to be rewarded with an invitation to join the Alliance. Different from Hungary was also the fact that the decision went against the preferences of the general public, predominantly hostile to military action. The differences between the three countries were to become visible again a decade later on the occasion of Kosovo's self-proclaimed independence.

ii) Kosovo's independence in 2008

The unilateral declaration of independence of Kosovo from Serbia, in February 2008, was a significant external challenge, requiring a clear position by European governments. At the EU level, the expected moment of Kosovo's declaration of independence was challenging for, again, it was a test for the CFSP and the EU's ambition to play a significant external role. It is a commonplace idea that the CFSP came to life due to the wars in the former Yugoslavia and the inability of the EU to confront the crises unfolding in its own backyard. The fact that in 1999 it was NATO and the US, not the EU and Western governments of the EU, which played the major role in stopping the Serbian army

¹²³ IPS-Inter Press Service, May 10, 1999, 'Europe: Balkan conflict could speed up EU expansion.'

action against Kosovar Albanians illustrated the EU's inability to take decisive action when both political means and military capabilities were needed. This is why the failure to act in 1999 was one of the key factors in the development of the ESDP, a fact made plain by the EU High Representative for CFSP, Javier Solana (for an overview, see Shepherd, 2009: 515-6).

When the negotiations on the final status of Kosovo failed, the EU member states faced the imminent challenge of having to decide how to respond to a likely unilateral declaration of independence of the Kosovo parliament. The UN Special Envoy, the former Finnish president Marti Ahtisaari, conducted the negotiations between the Serbian government and the Kosovar Albanians throughout 2006. The settlement plan proposed by Ahtisaari and backed by the US and most EU governments, without explicitly mentioning independence from Serbia, provided for internationally supervised statehood for Kosovo, including conditions for self-rule and the right to apply for membership in international organizations. However, the talks ended without a solution acceptable to both sides. Since it was not possible to get the Ahtisaari plan through the UN Security Council due to Russia's opposition, the leaders of the Kosovar Albanians decided to move towards independence with or without full UN endorsement. The anticipated declaration of independence was seen differently by EU member states, even if most of them agreed with the Ahtisaari plan. Although the adoption of a common position on the recognition of independence *per se* became unlikely within the EU Council, there was a clear support by all states with regard to the need for the EU to assume the greatest role in Kosovo. It would have been politically unacceptable for the EU and EU member states to fail once again (as they did before) to address the problems of the Western Balkans.

For Hungary, the declaration of independence of Kosovo from Serbia was once again linked to the issue of the sizeable Hungarian minority in Vojvodina. The major concern

was related to the potential retaliatory measures that the Serbian authorities (or Serbian radical groups) might have taken against ethnic Hungarians in case Hungary supported the unilateral declaration of independence of Kosovo (interviews, Brussels and Budapest 2007-8). No less important was the position of the Serbian authorities, according to which Belgrade would take diplomatic measures against any country recognizing Kosovo as a newly independent state (interview, Budapest 2008). As a neighbouring country, Hungary was keen to preserve positive bilateral relationships with Serbia (interview, Budapest, 2008).

Hungary's position was expressed in a letter from Prime Minister Gyurcsány addressed to the German chancellor, Angela Merkel (Germany held the EU rotating presidency in the first half of 2007). According to the letter, Hungary was favourable to the Ahtisaari Plan. Gyurcsány highlighted the fact that it was in Hungary's best interest that the decision on Kosovo should guarantee sustained stability in the region and that all parties involved be allowed to expound their position within reasonable time limits, in a genuine manner.¹²⁴ However, as foreign minister Kinga Göncz explained, for Hungary what mattered most were the provisions on the autonomy and the rights of Kosovo's communities. The emphasis placed on the issue of minorities' rights differs from the one on the respect for international law and order dominating the discourse in Slovakia and Romania and stemmed from the way in which the national interest is defined in each of the three capitals.

The internal political debate in Hungary was limited to the question of how Hungarian foreign policy should respond to this challenge. The Hungarian government preferred a strategy of wait and see, in general supportive of a common European position. The main opposition party, FIDESZ, after criticising the indecision of the government,

¹²⁴ Hungarian News Agency (MTI), February 9, 2007, 'Kosovo decision should secure stability, says PM.'

eventually adopted a similar standpoint. According to Zsolt Németh, the chairman of the Parliament's Foreign Affairs Committee, the position of Hungary should be derived from the national interest, defined as the stability of the Western Balkans. To this end, Hungary should support the international recognition of Kosovo's independence, alongside other EU member states like the United Kingdom, France, and Germany, since the prolongation of the state of uncertainty would definitely increase instability in the region. Németh rejected the position of those states opposing Kosovo's independence and accused them of having as the starting point their own internal problems instead of being focused on the settlement of the problem at hand. His remarks targeted especially the position of Russia with regard to the frozen conflicts in the post-Soviet space, Slovakia and Romania on their concerns about their ethnic minorities, as well as Greece, Cyprus, and Spain on their own minorities.¹²⁵ The remarks targeting the position of Slovakia and Romania were not unusual, being a symptom of the more confrontational conception of FIDESZ when it comes to issues such as ethnic minorities and collective rights. The Orbán government during 1998-2002 had a more nationalistic orientation, which to a certain extent was detrimental to the objective of good neighbourly relations. Besides, as the main opposition party in Hungary after 2002, FIDESZ's leaders expressed on various occasions more critical views regarding the governments in Bratislava and Bucharest.

The government, however, adopted a more cautious approach. Even after Kosovo's Assembly issued the declaration of independence, on 17th February 2008, the statement of the Hungarian foreign minister was that Hungary would wait until after the meeting of EU foreign ministers in Brussels before adopting an official position on this matter. The disunity among the EU member states was evident even before this moment. The formal meeting of foreign ministers had to agree the obvious, namely that a common position

¹²⁵ BBC Monitoring Europe, February 13, 2008, 'Hungarian opposition stance on Kosovo Independence outlined.'

could not be reached and the member states should address the question of independence on a bilateral basis, while at the same time trying to make the Kosovo case a '*sui generis*' one (Council of the European Union, 2008). It was easier to agree on the deployment of the European Union Police and Rule of Law mission in Kosovo (EULEX), even by the member states which opposed the recognition of Kosovo's independence. This was possible since EULEX's mandate, as defined by the Joint Action adopted by the Council on 4th February 2008, was to assist Kosovo's institutions and judicial authorities and law enforcement agencies in developing and strengthening a multi-ethnic justice and police system. The key point was that Kosovo's institutions were defined on the basis of UN resolution 1244 and not as the new organs of a recently established state with uncertain international legitimacy.¹²⁶ For the member states reluctant to accept independence, such as Slovakia and Romania, it was perfectly legitimate to endorse and participate in the EULEX mission since it was based on a UN resolution.

In Hungary, the decision to participate in the EULEX mission was agreed long before knowing the position on the declaration of independence. Following the GAERC meeting, however, foreign minister Göncz proposed that the government start the procedure for officially recognising the independence of Kosovo. The cabinet meeting on 19th March formally decided that the Republic of Hungary recognises the independence of Kosovo. That it was an uneasy and delicate choice is proved by the fact that the government of Hungary decided to issue the declaration as a joint statement together with Bulgaria and Croatia, two other countries directly neighbouring Serbia, the first a full member state, the other a candidate state (interview, Budapest 2008). The ground for the joint declaration was prepared in early February by a joint call of Hungary and Bulgaria for

¹²⁶ Council Joint Action 2008/124/CFSP of 4 February 2008 on the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo, EULex Kosovo.

a common EU position on the status of the breakaway Serbian province of Kosovo.¹²⁷ This issue-based *ad-hoc* alliance was due to the fact that Hungary and Bulgaria were the only two direct EU neighbours of Serbia likely to follow the position of the majority of EU member states on the recognition of Kosovo's independence. Romania, the other EU state directly neighbouring Serbia, made clear its position that it does not intend to recognise Kosovo's independence. A common position adopted at the EU level would have allowed the two countries to avoid the need to take individual decisions with critical consequences for their bilateral relations with Serbia. In a way, EU unity would have provided the two countries with a protective umbrella. However, as long as a common position was not achieved, Hungary opted for the solution of issuing the joint declaration with Bulgaria and Croatia. The declaration was formulated in an extremely cautious way, trying to play down the objections of the Serbian government. The reaction of the Serbian MFA came, however, immediately, harshly accusing the recognition of breakaway Kosovo and threatening to take diplomatic measures.¹²⁸

In the case of Slovakia, the prospect that Kosovo would soon declare unilaterally its independence from Serbia pressed the Slovak authorities to agree a common position on this matter. The position of Slovakia was complicated by the fact that Slovakia was at that time a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council, hence directly involved in the decision on the future status of Kosovo, based on the recommendations submitted by Ahtisaari in early March. As an EU member state, Slovakia was expected to uphold the common position of the Council on this matter, despite its reluctance. Moreover, the US and most of the EU's governments supported the independence of Kosovo.

¹²⁷ Agence France Presse, February 5, 2008, 'Bulgaria, Hungary call for common EU position on Kosovo.'

¹²⁸ Associated Press Worldstream, March 19, 2008, 'Croatia and Hungary recognize Kosovo, drawing criticism from Belgrade.'

Slovakia's unenthusiastic view on the self-proclaimed independence of Kosovo had roots in history and pan-Slavic linguistic identity (interview, Brussels and Bratislava, 2007-8). However, the pan-Slavic feelings of shared identity seem to be more salient in Slovakia than in other Slavic European countries, like the Czech Republic or Poland. To a certain extent, this might be due to the presence of a Slovak ethnic minority group living in Vojvodina, which is considered a bridge linking Serbia and Slovakia (interview, Bratislava, 2008). More than anything else, the reluctance of the Slovak political elite (and general public) to accept the unilaterally declared independence of Kosovo is rooted in the perception that this case might be interpreted as a precedent for similar future claims elsewhere. The underlying concern was that ethnic Hungarians in Slovakia might feel encouraged by this precedent and, one day, follow a similar path (this view was most vocally expressed by Ján Slota, the leader of the SNS).¹²⁹

According to the constitutional law adopted in June 2004, the Slovak National Council has the power to issue binding resolutions on the government and its individual members. Based on this law, the Slovak National Council decided the official position of the Slovak Republic on 28th March 2007. The resolution, backed by the governing coalition and the majority of the opposition's members of parliament, wanted Serbia's demands to be respected and stated that '*Full and unlimited independence of the province Kosovo is not in the interest of the region*'. Even the fervent Atlanticist policy-makers contended that the US position on this matter was wrong (interviews, Bratislava, 2008). Those who supported NATO's air strikes against the Milošević regime in 1999 considered the US and EU support for Kosovo independence as an external imposition, as an unjust punishment, since post-1999 Serbia is a democratic country, holding fair elections and electing democratic representatives (interview, Bratislava, 2008).

¹²⁹ BBC Monitoring Europe, February 17, 2008, 'Slovakia not to recognize Kosovo independence.'

The only political party in the Parliament that abstained from the vote on the resolution was the organization of ethnic Hungarians (similar in this matter to the situation in Romania). According to the leader of the Hungarian Coalition Party, Pál Csáky, as long as the US and most European governments supported Kosovo, the rejection of independence would be unsustainable in the long run. Besides, he argued, pan-Slavic and pan-Russian feelings would bring Slovakia under Russia's sphere of influence, which would be a step in the wrong direction.¹³⁰ There was an obvious split between the positions advocated by Slovak political parties, both in government and opposition (although there were nuances, the overall standpoint was against the unilateral independence) and the solution advocated by the Slovak Democratic Coalition (SDK) in Slovakia (very similar to what happened in Romania on the same matter).

The resolution of the Slovak Parliament went against the preferences of the Foreign Ministry that had previously backed the Ahtisaari plan. Within the Slovak Permanent Representation in Brussels and the MFA in Bratislava there was a greater degree of flexibility in terms of the future status of Kosovo, a greater awareness of the mainstream position of other countries and the risk for Slovakia to see itself isolated. The space for manoeuvre of the MFA was constrained by the resolution of the political forces in the Parliament and the MFA had to stick with this position. Within the GAERC meeting held in Bremen, in March 2007, during the German EU presidency, foreign minister Kubiš had to present the binding resolution of the Slovak National Council to the other foreign ministers in the EU Council, some of whom were astonished by it.¹³¹ The Slovak foreign minister had also refused to make clear whether the position of the Slovak National Council corresponds to his own opinions, which he considered as irrelevant in this

¹³⁰ BBC Monitoring Europe, December 9, 2007, 'Slovak politicians differ on Kosovo's independence.'

¹³¹ CTK National News Wire, March 31, 2007, 'Slovakia's stance on Kosovo exceptional in EU.'

context.¹³² The political pressure came not only from the capital, but also from European leaders themselves, pressing Slovak diplomacy to feel responsible for the EU's failure to reach a common position. Kubiš voiced annoyance over the fact that '*our EU partners see Slovakia's position as...[contributing] to the feeling that unity has been disrupted.*'¹³³

However, similar positions on the future of Kosovo came from several other EU countries like Romania (see later this chapter), Spain, Greece and Cyprus. The fact that there were several countries sharing a similar position on this matter prevented Slovakia from being completely isolated in the Council. The other side of the coin is that the other EU foreign ministers had to accept that a common position, backed by all member states, is not feasible and a formula of compromise had to be found in order to salvage the image of the EU's unity.

At the time of the formal declaration of independence, on 17th February 2008, the official position of Slovak foreign policy was that for the time being Kosovo would not be recognised as an independent state. Foreign minister Kubiš made the point that Slovakia will decide on any further move only after evaluating the situation in Kosovo and the steps undertaken by the international community, while at the same time supporting the activities of the UN, EU, NATO and other international organizations present in the region, especially by means of Slovak participation in NATO's (KFOR) and the EU (EULEX) missions based on UN Security Council Resolution 1244 (1999).¹³⁴ The decision to contribute personnel and participate in the EU Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo, which aimed to support local authorities in the field of police, judiciary and customs capacity building, while at the same time not recognising the very entity which is the target of the

¹³² Ibidem.

¹³³ EU Observer, April 19, 2007, 'EU ministers to avoid Kosovo question amid ongoing disunity.'

¹³⁴ 'Slovak MFA takes note of Kosovo unilateral declaration of independence', online http://www.mzv.sk/servlet/content?MT=/App/WCM/main.nsf/vw_byID/ID_B282288063522198C1256C7D003A13DF_EN&OpenDocument=Y&NCH=Y&menu=0&OB=0&LANG=EN, accessed on July 2009.

EU mission, might be seen as paradoxical and contradictory (the same is also true in the case of Romania). However, this is a good example of the complexity of EU membership and the difficulty of balancing the multiplicity of commitments with the protection of *domaines réservés*. On the one hand, it was a commitment to the development of the CFSP and ESDP, to enhancing the European prospects for the Western Balkan countries and to upholding international law. On the other hand, it was the different perception of what is the national interest, reflecting divergent preferences from the mainstream preferences of EU member states, which undermined the objective of European unity and coherence in the foreign policy field. Hence, what appears at first sight as incoherence is in fact the need to balance between constraints and commitments.

In Romania, the political scene was deeply divided on questions of internal politics, resulting in the collapse of the coalition government that had won the elections in late 2004 and brought Romania into the EU in 2007. Following the general elections in November 2004, the left-wing government was replaced by a governmental coalition built around the centre-right Truth and Justice Alliance,¹³⁵ also including the party of ethnic Hungarians in Romania. At the same time, Traian Băsescu, the candidate of the Truth and Justice Alliance, won the presidential competition. The divergent preferences emerged immediately after accession, as if the glue keeping together the coalition government melted as soon as the common objective of European integration had been achieved. The political conflict within the governing coalition led to its breaking down and the formation of a minority government of liberals and the ethnic Hungarian party, informally supported by the social democrats in opposition. Even worse, the internal political conflict culminated in the Parliament voting for the impeachment of the president for unconstitutional behaviour and suspending him. The referendum organized according to

¹³⁵ The Justice and Truth Alliance (DA, Alianța Dreptate și Adevăr) consisted of centre-right liberal National Liberal Party (PNL) and the Democratic Party (PD).

the constitutional requirements resulted in a clear vote against the impeachment (three quarters of the 44% voter turnout).

Despite the internal political conflict, on the matter of Kosovo's declaration of independence, which was high on the international agenda throughout 2007 and early 2008, the preferences of Romanian political parties, both in government and opposition, coincided in a remarkable way. Like Slovakia, Romania was part of the club of dissident countries with regard to the support of a united EU front on Kosovo. The position of Romania in 2006, while the negotiations conducted by UN Special Envoy were underway, was that it supported a large degree of autonomy for Kosovo, but it could not agree with an approach targeting statehood and the existing borders; a large degree of autonomy is both a European approach and does not create any dangerous precedent.¹³⁶ There was a clear awareness of the fact that there was little chance to turn round a position that seemed to represent the will of the majority of the member states (not only the largest and most powerful members, such as the UK, France and Germany, but also smaller yet influential countries like the Netherlands). During 2006, at a time when Romania was not yet a full member of the EU, bilateral consultations had been also conducted with Slovakia and Greece, where the question of Kosovo's status was discussed. It became clear that Romania, as a future member, shared the objection to unilateral solutions on Kosovo with other member states.

The mandate given by the Supreme Council of National Defence to the foreign minister on the eve of the GAERC meeting in March 2007 was based on this standpoint, which has been reiterated throughout 2007, both within the EU framework and in bilateral meetings, such as the meeting of foreign minister Cioroianu with Serbian ambassadors in Belgrade, in December 2007: 'any solution of the status of Kosovo should be in line with

¹³⁶Address of the president of Romania, Traian Băsescu, at the meeting with the heads of foreign diplomatic missions in Bucharest, 20 January 2006.

the international law in force and should be accepted by both parties. We support a negotiated settlement, endorsed by the UN Security Council'.¹³⁷ At the same time, again in the same fashion to Slovakia, Romanian officials expressed from an early stage (i.e. early 2007) that Bucharest intends to support EU efforts in Kosovo in the post-conflict stage.¹³⁸ In January 2008, the concrete nature of the support was defined: Romania was ready to send a contingent of 175 policemen as contribution to the EULEX mission.¹³⁹

In the view of the Romanian president expressed on several occasions, the unilateral declaration of Kosovo's independence might fuel conflicts elsewhere. He pointed to the frozen conflicts in the post-Soviet space, especially the separatist pro-Russian regime in Transdnier region in the Republic of Moldova. When the war in Georgia over the separatist region of South Ossetia broke out in the summer of 2008, president Bănescu did not hesitate to blame the 'great powers' and to say that this was the direct consequence of the decision on Kosovo. The position of Romanian officials was linked by various media observers with the concern that the ethnic Hungarians in Romania might invoke Kosovo as a precedent for similar demands. Yet, Romanian officials made it explicit on numerous occasions that the unilateral declaration of Kosovo's independence cannot be interpreted as the existence in international law of provisions for collective rights for national minorities or granting them the right of secession.¹⁴⁰

There was, practically, no controversy with regard to how Romania should react to the unilateral declaration of independence, with the notable exception of the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania (UDMR) (similar to Slovakia). The vote in the

¹³⁷ Address of foreign minister Adrian Cioroianu at the meeting with Serbian ambassadors, Belgrade, 12 June 2007.

¹³⁸ Romanian MFA, Press release, 12-13 February 2007, 'The Meeting of the General Affairs and External Relations Council (GAERC) in Brussels.'

¹³⁹ Address of the president of Romania, Traian Bănescu, at the meeting with the heads of foreign diplomatic missions in Bucharest, 23 January 2008.

¹⁴⁰ The statement of the prime minister Tăriceanu in front of the Romanian Parliament following the declaration of Kosovo's independence and the GAERC Meeting in Brussels, 19 February 2008.

Romanian Parliament, on 19th February 2008, on the recognition or not of the new entity was overwhelmingly against independence (357 against, 27 in favour). Markó Béla, the moderate leader of the UDMR, employed the same arguments used by the representatives of the ethnic Hungarian party in Slovakia. He declared in a press conference that ‘Sooner or later Romania, as a member state of the European Union, will have to recognize Kosovo as a new independent state’¹⁴¹. On the other hand, he argued that the only precedent to be drawn from the Kosovo case is in terms of the need for international actors to get involved in strengthening the rights of ethnic minorities.¹⁴²

Even if this was a moderate position, not shared by the more radical representatives of the community of ethnic Hungarians in Romania, it stirred up angry reactions by Romanian political parties. At stake was the fact that UDMR was a member of the governing coalition, alongside the liberal party. This created a different situation from the political context in Slovakia, which was otherwise very similar. The position adopted raised, therefore, the suspicions that the official stance of the Romanian government was not coherent. Unsurprisingly, there were voices asking for the UDMR to step down from the government.

7.7. Conclusions

The aim of this chapter was to examine the extent of change in the way in which the national foreign policy has been formulated and conducted in Hungary, Slovakia and Romania before and after EU accession. The main questions were whether a more salient European dimension turned out to characterize the post-accession foreign policy thinking and formulation in the new member states and whether the conduct of foreign policy reflected a greater preference for EU channels rather than other means. These two aspects

¹⁴¹ IPS News Agency, 18th February 2008, ‘Kosovo: Romania 'Schizophrenic' Over Independence.’

¹⁴² Ibid.

were considered indicators of the extent to which national foreign policy were Europeanized. The chapter attempted to demonstrate that governmental politics and the politics of national identity played a key role in the definition of national preferences and that after accession the new member states placed a greater emphasis on the pursuit of the national interest.

Before accession, the CEE countries had to compromise over some of their *domaines réservés*, such as the conclusion of bilateral treaties between Hungary and Slovakia and Hungary and Romania, equally contested but also needed in order to comply with the external demands and to further progress on the integration path. After accession, the fact that the foreign policy of the new member states placed a 'greater emphasis on the pursuit of the national interest' did not mean that the defence and projection of national interest was absent before accession. That European integration was the main strategic priority of foreign policy in the CEE countries meant that all other objectives have been subsumed to it. Once the accession was achieved, foreign policy of the new member states needed to redefine new priorities and reorder them according to their (perceived) importance. This was an inward looking process, an inventory of state's interests. The balance between international commitments and national interests was reconsidered in all three countries. Likewise, the transatlantic link and the key role of the USA in Europe remained fundamental in their foreign policy preferences, as well as the stress on NATO as the main security provider in Europe. At the same time, there was an ever-growing awareness of the need to strengthen the CFSP and ESDP and the commitment to do so characterized the practical conduct of foreign policy in all three countries (although with some notable exceptions). They all support further enlargement of the EU, although each of them has a favourite country for which they have assumed the role of advocate within the EU. For instance, Hungary is an advocate of Croatia, Slovakia of Serbia and Romania of the

Republic of Moldova. Broadening the geographical scope, all CEE candidate countries share these similar features. Poland is a supporter of Ukraine's European prospects. The Atlanticism is a common tenet of foreign policy of all new member states, although in various degrees.

As clarified at the beginning of this chapter, the definition of state's interests is a function of the ideological orientation and political preferences of political parties in government and opposition. Although there are interests which transcend domestic politics, such as territorial integrity, the formulation of national interests reflect the inherent contradictions of any democratic polity. With accession, the internal political debate turned on to the question of how the interests of the state are to be defended and projected within the EU. The accent placed on the pursuit of national interest was therefore a direct consequence of the understanding that pre-accession conditionally no longer constrained the state's actions, that it was legitimate to defend own interests and that the existence of *domaines réservés* was perfectly acceptable.

There are, certainly, differences in the manner to which European integration affected the foreign policy of Hungary, Slovakia and Romania. Perhaps the most important is that the reaffirmation of national interest is given different meanings. For Hungary, it is a matter of national interest to further its national policy through the channels available within the EU and to reunite the Hungarian nation within a borderless Europe. For Slovakia and Romania, it is a matter of national interest to oppose the introduction of collective rights for national minorities. The different formulation of national interests reflects the way in which domestic politics filters historical experiences and transpose them into policy objectives. In all three cases, the European Union provides the institutional framework and platform to further these objectives. Before accession, the rhetoric about their innate Europeanness, shared norms and values, common heritage and

sense of belonging had obscured, to a certain extent, the emphasis on local specificities and unique historical experiences. In a region where history was a zero-sum experience, where the gains of one country meant necessarily a loss for other country in terms of borders and populations, the perception of what is the national interest is deeply rooted in the past. If before accession, the national interest was defined more in terms of self-identification with Europe and Euro-Atlantic values, the formal accession had removed the previous qualms in regard to the reiteration of a uniqueness that has to be preserved within the European melting pot. One of the most visible expressions of these differences in the understanding of what is the national interest and how it has to be defended within the EU was the case of Kosovo's declaration of independence. Despite the search for a common position within the EU and the commitment to the development of the CFSP, the eventual stance was dictated by national idiosyncrasies.

Other examples of determination to pursue what was perceived as in the national interest by the governments, irrespective of international concerns, are the Slovak Language Law of Robert Fico's cabinet, the Hungarian dual citizenship law, and the Romanian policy of granting Romanian passports to the citizens of the Republic of Moldova. While each of these cases deserves a more detailed discussion, it was not the aim of this research to focus on them (not least because these are recent events, unfolding at the time of writing up this thesis). Yet, these developments support the argument of this chapter that the governments of the new member states fell less constrained than before accession to pursue the course of action they deem appropriate.

There are potential implications for the future of the EU's foreign and security policy and EU ability to speak with a single voice. The EU's unity has been shattered on various key occasions by the member states themselves, despite their previous commitments to act in unison. The lesson learned for the new member states was that internal disunity is a

factor that might help sometimes. In the case of the US military invasion of Iraq, it helped because there was no EU common position. The challenge was to choose between the 'core' Europeans (i.e. France and Germany) and the rest in an attempt to choose the camp most likely to provide the greatest benefits and, perhaps, to inflict a lesser degree of damage.

The distinction between old and new member states is not a workable one. All too often, the split within the EU was not between old and new member states, but between groups of states with different policy preferences. The support for NATO and the US's role in Europe is shared by both West and CEE countries. The war in Iraq demonstrated that Europe is not divided between a Western and an Eastern half, but that the West was fractured in two competing camps. Similarly, the Kosovo declaration of independence was opposed by countries from both the group of old (Greece and Spain) and new member states (Slovakia, Romania and Cyprus). It is therefore unrealistic to expect that a greater Europeanization of foreign policies of the new member states would help the aim of EU unity and coherence in foreign policy. The contradictions within the EU are deeply rooted and unlikely to disappear soon.

The diversity of preferences in EU-15 and its potential to compromise the ambitious goal of unity is a proven fact. The 2004 and 2007 enlargements of the EU proved that the trend of further diversification proceeds with an increased awareness of the national interest among the new member states. There is hardly any reluctance of the new member states to oppose what they perceive as touching upon the national interest, no matter how the national interest is defined. This trend is likely to challenge further the EU's ambitions to act as a unitary actor.

However, the diversity of preferences in an enlarged EU has a beneficial side for the CFSP. Although the CFSP has a dynamic of its own, driven by the ever-growing

institutionalization of foreign policy, it also represents a collection of policy preferences of the member states. The diversity of preferences enriches the CFSP, by adding new policy initiatives and projects. It is worth pointing out that while the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) was designed in the aftermath of the 2004 Enlargement, the Eastern Partnership was established in 2009 because of the pressures of CEE countries. Their aim was to give more coherence to the relations between the EU and its Eastern neighbours, by separating them from the group of Mediterranean neighbours of the EU. Another example is the Black Sea Synergy, the EU initiative aiming to increase cooperation among and between the countries surrounding the Black Sea, which was the result of the pressures from the two most recent members of the EU, Bulgaria and Romania. The list of examples is longer and is not the aim here to provide an exhaustive account, but to illustrate the point that the diversity of preferences contributes to the diversity of policy instruments of the CFSP. The concluding chapter examines in more detail the way in which the enlargement and the diversification of preferences is likely to affect the development of EU foreign policy.

CHAPTER 8 CONCLUSIONS

8.1. Introduction

This thesis has examined the impact of European integration on the foreign policy of Hungary, Slovakia and Romania, three of the new member states of the EU from CEE. The aim was to answer three principal and several subsidiary research questions. The three principal questions were as follows: **a)** what is the impact of European integration on the foreign policy of the new member states from Central and Eastern Europe?; **b)** whether and to what extent there is convergence or/divergence of national responses to Europeanization pressures? And **c)** why there is divergence of national responses?

In order to answer these principal questions, a systemic analytical framework has been designed to examine the top-down Europeanization of: **a)** the institutional basis of foreign policy-making and coordination of European affairs; **b)** the national identity reconstruction through the process of elite socialization; and **c)** the practical content of foreign policy, its values, aims and means. The subsidiary six research questions correspond to the three dimensions on which the analytical framework is built (see section 2 of this chapter for a review and discussion of how the empirical findings answered the six research questions).

This last chapter has four major sections. The first one discusses whether the systemic analytical framework delivered on the initial expectations. The second one takes stock of this thesis's findings against the background of the initial research questions and assumptions. The third section examines the limitations of the research. Taking a critical approach, it underscores the limits with regard to the initial objectives of the research. The final section examines how this research project contributes to the literature on the

Europeanization of foreign policy and foreign policy analysis. It also considers the question of whether the empirical findings of this thesis can be generalized beyond the three countries selected as case studies for this research project.

8.2. To what extent did the systemic analytical framework deliver on the initial expectations?

The reason why the systemic framework was chosen for the objectives of this research was detailed at length in the analytical chapter. It is worth reiterating the key aspects of the systemic framework used by this thesis. The model suggested that the EU (a political system in its own right) may be seen as the source of a set of inputs of demands (the *acquis communautaire* and *politique*, conditionality, formal or informal norms and rules etc) or support (institutional and normative models, political allies etc) which affect the policy-making, elite socialization and formal content and conduct of foreign policy (the outputs of Europeanization) (see p. 51 and pp. 56-67). For reasons explained elsewhere (see pp. 52-6), this thesis assumed that the domestic sources of foreign policy (i.e. governmental politics and national identity politics) mediate between the input of Europeanization and the outcomes to be explained. It also argued that the mediating factors may convincingly account for the differentiated impact of Europeanization. In brief, the political systems framework was expected to provide a convenient organizing device for examining the domestic impact of Europeanization.

The critique that might be addressed with regard to opting for the systemic model is that it is too mechanical and causal, while some of the assumptions of this thesis would suggest the need for a more flexible, more interpretive approach. However, as this thesis tried to clarify (see p. 54), ‘causality’ is not used in a positivist sense, especially with regard to the issue of identity change (see Ruggie, et al., 1998: 869), in which case there is

no discernible cause, but rather a specific context or environment potentially conducive to a change of prevailing norms at the domestic level. If this view of ‘causality’ is accepted, the abovementioned critique of the systems approach can be played down.

Another critique might be raised with regard to the fact that this framework is too simple and, therefore, inappropriate in accounting for the complexity of the integration process. The answer to this potential critique is that the consistency of any analytical framework is given by the coherence between the initial assumptions, data collection and data analysis, irrespective of how complex is the chosen model. Besides, as explained in chapter four (p. 69), the three outputs of the Europeanization process (institutional change, elite socialization, and conduct of foreign policy) were selected because they were widely targeted by the Europeanization literature. In this way, it was possible to contrast the extent of change of these three outcomes not only across the countries examined as case-studies in this thesis (and across time), but by drawing lessons from other studies focused on different countries under similar conditions, facing comparable adaptational pressures.

Hence, the systemic analytical framework proved a useful heuristic device for organizing the relationships between the independent variable (Europeanization), mediating factors (governmental politics and national identity politics) and outputs (institutions and policy-making, elite socialization and the formal content and conduct of foreign policy).

8.3. To what extent have the empirical findings answered the research questions?

The three principal research questions of this thesis served different purposes. The questions about the nature and extent of the Europeanization of foreign policy and the one about the extent to which Europeanization caused convergence or/and divergence were

descriptive. The question about the differentiated impact of Europeanization was explanatory. The first two were expected to provide empirical material with which the third question could be answered against the background of the initial assumptions. These assumptions were that the mediating role of governmental politics and national identity politics (the intervening factors proposed in this thesis) offer a convincing explanation for the differentiated impact of Europeanization in Hungary, Slovakia and Romania.

The following discuss in more details the empirical findings with regard to each of the six specific research questions and in the context of the distinct empirical chapters where these questions have been addressed.

1. What is the nature and extent of institutional change of the national foreign policy systems in line with the formal and/or informal requirements of participation in EU foreign policy?

The first empirical chapter employed a historical institutional approach in explaining institutional change and provided extensive empirical evidence with regard to the successive stages of transformation of the systems of coordination of European affairs and foreign policy making in the three countries in. The use of the pre-accession and integration stages was useful in mapping some of the major institutional adjustments in all three countries corresponding to similar stages of the European integration process. The Europe Agreement stage led to the creation of the institutions of association reflecting the provisions of the Europe Agreements. The opening of the negotiation talks led to the creation of the position of chief negotiator and his team and of departments of European affairs in all ministries and governmental agencies. Empirical findings suggested that institutional adjustment was likely to occur after the change of coalition governments. For instance, the system of coordinating European affairs was changed in Hungary after the

parliamentary elections in 1994 (moving the Office of European Affairs from the Ministry of International Economic Relations to the Ministry of International Trade, see pp. 102-103). It happened also in 2002 (p. 116) and after the replacement as Prime Minister of Medgyessy with Ferenc Gyurcsány in August 2004, soon after accession (moving the coordination of European affairs back and forth between the MFA and PM's Office, see p. 118). The change of the governing coalition in Slovakia in 1998 led to a reinforcement of the institutional capacity of the MFA (p. 107). In Romania, significant decisions were adopted following the reshuffle of the governing coalition in 1999 (moving the coordination of European affairs to the MFA from the PM's office) and after the general elections in late 2000 (creating a completely new Ministry of European Integration) (pp. 122-4). Finally, the post-accession period eliminated most of the previous institutional arrangements due to the fact that the function they were supposed to perform was no longer needed (i.e the institutions of association). However, this approach did not say anything about why a particular design of coordination of European affairs was preferred over alternative options. The second research question assumed the task of clarifying why there was divergence across countries by testing the assumption that governmental politics is a key explanatory factor.

2. Why does the institutional transformation in view of European integration reflect different patterns across the national systems of foreign policy in the three countries?

The extent to which the second research question elicited convincing answers deserves a more detailed analysis. The governmental politics was a key element of this discussion. It was made clear that there is a linkage between different coalition cabinets and the way in which national responses to Europeanization were formulated. An important characteristic of governmental politics in Hungary, Slovakia and Romania is the

fact that during the last two decades, the majority of cabinets have been coalition cabinets. It is true that coalition cabinets have a long history in Europe, being part of the daily functioning of most political systems (with the notable exception of the UK, at least until the most recent elections in May 2010, or Malta for that matter). From this point of view, the three countries examined here are not exceptional in any way. The salience of coalition cabinets adds an extra layer of complexity when it comes to deciphering the mechanisms of domestic politics. It has also been shown that intra-governmental competition between ministries was an important factor (although not the only one) explaining why the centre of gravity in managing European affairs changed over time. Besides, details were provided with regard to the roles played by political leaders or senior officials in the policy-making process.

Deeper insights were acquired by focusing on the decisions taken by different cabinets or coalition cabinets and the inter-institutional competition within the core executive. Evidence has been provided with regard to the fact that the change of coalition governments was often (although not always) associated with both a new perspective of what represents European integration (foreign policy, external economic relations, or internal politics) and who was to be responsible for managing it. Here it is worth restating the choice to examine the problem of coordination of European affairs in the first empirical chapter. The choice might appear surprising, given the fact that the focus of this thesis is on foreign policy and foreign policy-making. However, European integration was perceived at times as a matter of foreign policy and some other times as something more complex, intermingled with domestic politics. The coordination of European affairs appears in this light as a component of the foreign policy-making process. This confusion was reflected in the way in which the system of coordination and management of European integration was designed, being managed either by the MFA, the PM's Office or other

bodies. What European integration was about and who should deal with it was a puzzle in all three countries.

It was interesting to see how the perception of different governments oscillated between a view which treated European affairs as either foreign policy or external economic relations and one which gradually moved towards viewing EU affairs as something more pervasive and complex, deeply affecting the domestic level. The way in which European integration was perceived had consequences on the decision of which domestic institutional actor had to be in charge of coordinating the process (e.g. the MFA, the PM's office or a dedicated new ministry of European affairs, as was the case in Romania). It was clear that there is no unique pattern replicated across the three countries.

Certainly, as this thesis has shown, the preferences defended by senior members of the cabinets were also linked to the dynamic of inter-ministerial competition. The assumption of the governmental politics approach is that administrative-bureaucratic bodies within the government tend to expand their role in the system of policy-making, acting as benefit maximizers. Controlling the management of European affairs was an important matter in the inter-institutional competition between ministries of foreign affairs, ministries of economy or the offices of the prime minister. Such a position meant greater budgetary resources and influence in relation to other ministries and governmental agencies, as well as greater political leverage for the minister responsible of European affairs within the cabinet. At the end of the day, European integration involved the transfer of substantial pre-accession funding from the EU's coffers.

On the other hand, the inter-institutional competition between different bureaucratic bodies accounts for institutional continuity or inertia as well, since the change of coalition government has not always led to a new adjustment of the institutional design of policy-making. For instance, the Orbán cabinet largely preserved the design elaborated by the

Horn government between 1994 and 1998. The government of Robert Fico has not brought significant changes to the system of coordinating European affairs left in place by the Dzurinda cabinet. Similarly, in Romania, the Ministry of European Integration was not transformed into a department subordinated to the prime minister immediately after the elections in the November of 2004, but only two years later when it was clear that the EU accession was irreversible.

3. Do the experts and diplomats from the Permanent Representations hold different views on the aims and means of EU foreign policy from those in the capitals, working in the ministries of foreign affairs?

The empirical findings to this research question suggested that the national representatives in Brussels did undertake a learning process during the first few years of participation in the meetings of EU Council, either as observers in the initial stage and as full members after accession. On the one hand, the learning process involved acquiring new knowledge about how precisely the EU foreign policy towards non-member states and with regard to specific issues is formulated. On the other hand, learning the rules of the game, both formal and informal, learning new norms of compromise and consensus-seeking, avoidance of hard bargaining and respect for other countries *domaines réservés* by the new national representatives was instrumental in their smooth insertion into the new environment. It became clear that there is a stark difference between the national officials detached to the Permanent Representations and those working in the national ministries of foreign affairs on the matter of knowing the policy and the rules of the game; the former were clearly better informed than their colleagues in the capitals. Their superior expertise of the national official in Brussels was widely acknowledged by interviewees in all three national capitals as well as the greater influence Permanent Representations have over the

formulation of national foreign policies (except in the case of sensitive issues, such as Kosovo declaration of independence).

At the same time, more similarities than differences could be noticed between the two groups of national officials with regard to the perception of EU norms. In both cases, the relevance of these norms is accepted, but in an instrumental manner. What these views share is a certain degree of scepticism. However, the officials in Brussels tend to behave more according to the norms and rules of the EU culture of compromise than their fellow colleagues in the national capitals. This fact is not too surprising given the constraints and opportunities of the social environment in which human agents operate. In the case of the national officials in Brussels, not to play according to the rule of the game and by the norms of compromise and consensus means to be marginalized or miss opportunities. Therefore, it is a matter a rational calculation to follow the rules and behave according to the norms of the community to which an individual belong at a certain point in time.

4. Is elite socialization simply a process of learning new norms and rules or does it have a deeper character that affects the inner self-identification of the participant agents?

While the two research questions in the first chapter tried to explain cross-country variation drawing almost exclusively on governmental politics explanations, the second empirical chapter combined governmental politics and national identity politics as explanatory factors. The latter analytical category was defined as the ideas national policy-makers hold about political community, which are used to activate a sense of unity and solidarity in order to legitimise political action. It was explained that there is no single set of ideas equally shared by all political actors (see pp. 138). Instead, it emerged that political parties, which were members of the coalition government or in opposition, play the issues of national and European identity differently.

Again, this is not unusual in Europe or elsewhere in the world. In a Burkeian fashion, conservative parties tend to stress the importance of traditional institutions and oppose change. Nationalist parties go even further in stressing the prevalence of national identity over other forms of regional or local identification. At the same time, given their internationalist ideology, the socialist or social-democratic parties tend to be focused the least on the question of national identity (except in the case of fusion between left and nationalist ideologies). Certainly, the national identity discourse was played heavily in Slovakia or Romania under Vladimír Mečiar and Ion Iliescu (the latter being the case of a fusion of leftist ideology and nationalism) and in Hungary under the József Antall and Viktor Orbán premierships. The post-2006 political developments in Slovakia (such as the adoption of the controversial Slovak language law) also suggest a fusion between the left-wing ideology and the emphasis of the national identity discourse of the governing coalition. The recent elections in Hungary in the spring of 2010, which were won by a landslide by FIDESZ, and the newly announced policy of offering Hungarian citizenship to the Magyars in neighbouring countries also confirm this point.

The discussion on the persistence of national identities and the way in which the official discourses targeting the issue of national identity and the relationship between the nation and Europe/European identity is important insofar as it provides the background for understanding the limits of elite socialization. The aphorism of governmental politics that ‘where you stand is where you sit’ or, in other words, the fact that individual preferences are determined by the roles individuals play within institutional settings (see Sears et al., 2003: 259), may account for different degrees of socialization. Hence, the primary loyalty rests with the home institutions. It was difficult to discern a transfer of loyalty towards the EU institutions, although empirical findings confirmed the assumption that senior officials and diplomats working in the permanent representations in Brussels have learnt how to

‘play’ their roles of ‘compromise-seekers’ and ‘consensus-seekers’ according to the EU’s rules and norms. Nonetheless, there is a difference between role-playing and beliefs. The assumption that diplomats in Brussels also performed the role of ‘norms entrepreneurs’ in relation to their colleagues in the capital was not upheld by consistent empirical evidence. The separation of national officials in two distinct groups proved problematic eventually, due to the high fluctuation of individuals back and forth between Brussels and the capitals, as well as the short terms of secondment in Brussels (see more on this at the section on research limitations, p. 246).

5. To what extent do the officially stated foreign policy priorities and commitments, interests and the means of achieving them reflect a more salient European dimension after accession?

Both governmental politics and national identity politics proved useful explanatory factors with regard to the issue of the formal conduct of foreign policy. The third chapter showed that foreign policy priorities often change in order to reflect the policy preferences of the governing coalition in power, which are also a function of the way in which constituent political parties perceive and define the issue of national identity. The official stance towards the EU and NATO integration of the post-communist governments of Romania until 1996 and Slovakia until 1998 lacked credibility, in spite of some formal steps in this direction. The case of Hungary plainly illustrated that the left-wing coalition governments had preferred to pursue the objectives of European, Euro-Atlantic integration, and a policy of good neighbourly relations, while the fate of national policy towards kin-Hungarians in neighbouring countries mattered more for the right wing cabinets.

6. To what extent does the conduct of foreign policy reflects a preference for EU channels rather than using other national/international tools?

The third empirical chapter examined at length the way in which the national foreign policies have related to the European foreign policy in routine policy making situations as well as in cases of critical external shock. The aim was to learn whether the EU channels were preferred over alternative options as an indicator of Europeanization in both situations of routine policy-making and external crises. The use of the two sub-case studies of US-war in Iraq and Kosovo independence (including the NATO intervention in Yugoslavia in 1999) offered additional material to this aim.

Routine foreign policy-making suggests the institutionalization of the long-term strategic objectives of foreign policy, which are pursued by political actors and bureaucratic machinery regardless of which government is in power. Maintaining a key role for the North Atlantic Alliance in Europe, developing the CFSP as a complementary and not competing instrument to NATO, seeking and preserving a privileged relationship with the United States, as well as focusing on the immediate neighbourhood have been and continue to be the key tenets of foreign policy in the Central and Eastern European countries. These long-term strategic objectives stayed the same even if the emphasis on one or another foreign policy priority might have shifted with a change of coalition government (as pointed out above).

In general, the emergence of the CFSP was viewed with scepticism by the new member states from CEE, especially due to the perception that it might undermine the role of the United States in European security. However, the support for the development of the CFSP was facilitated by a number of factors. During the accession talks, the CFSP was concluded amongst the very first, being one of the least problematic. The fact that national foreign policies were aligned with the EU common positions and joint actions almost

mechanically was because most of these issues targeted areas of the world of limited interest for the CEE countries. On the other hand, when the EU targeted regions like the Western Balkans or Eastern Europe, even if the national views were different from the EU's position, the importance of the objective of entering the EU overshadowed other concerns. The CEE countries' contribution to the emerging EU involvement in crisis management operations was helped by the previous experience of Hungary, Slovakia and Romania of participating in UN peacekeeping missions. The involvement in EU missions was seen as way of upholding the UN's multilateralism to which all three countries were formally committed.

The position of the three countries with regard to the US-led war in Iraq was certainly a clear illustration of the preference for non-EU channels of foreign policy-making. At the same time, the rift within the EU itself helped to justify the positions of the CEE countries. Indeed, this was a peculiar situation, which demonstrated the salience of national interests over a common European interest, which failed to materialize. However, a clear European position did emerge with regard to the International Criminal Court, while the Romanian government failed to align to this position, preferring to uphold the US stance. Again, this was an illustration of the absence of Europeanization, defined as preferring European foreign policy channels to other national or international instruments.

Similarly, the Kosovo declaration of independence illustrated once more that in extreme situations the EU's leverage over its member states is limited. Romania and Slovakia preferred not to recognize the unilateral declaration of independence of Kosovo, siding with the Serbian government and against the mainstream position within the EU. Again, such a position was helped by the fact that there were several other countries (i.e. Spain, Greece, Cyprus), which defected and undermined the EU's common front. This

inability of EU governments to agree recalled the observation of Jürgen Habermas and Jaques Derrida, who asked the question:

‘what use is a new office (the European foreign minister) as long as the governments do not agree on a common policy’ (Habermas and Derrida, 2003: 292).

It is not my aim here to engage in a deeper discussion on this matter, but only to show that both before and after accession there were instances when national preferences were forcefully put forward. In fact, this thesis has illustrated that the ‘Europeanization’ of foreign policy of the three countries has to be seen with caution.

Summary

The empirical findings to all six research questions, which were subsumed to the three broader questions about the Europeanization of foreign policy in the three countries, suggest that the impact of Europeanization has been uneven across countries and issues. The first empirical chapter argued that the institutional change of the system of foreign policy making and coordination of European affairs was required by European integration, but the final shape and nature of institutional transformation was mainly caused by domestic factors. It was also hard to prove the Europeanization through the process of elite socialization; the persistence of national identities and loyalties was the norm. Even if the officially stated foreign policy priorities have integrated a more salient European dimension, the conduct of foreign policy shows that when vital national interests are considered threatened by the EU common action, then the EU channels are avoided, as it was the case of Kosovo declaration of independence.

The context in which the foreign policy is conducted is certainly more complex, providing better opportunities to relate to third countries from a more comfortable position of being an EU member state. This view was highlighted by policy makers from the three

countries interviewed during the research fieldwork. From this point of view, European integration has empowered and given extra weight to the foreign policy of the new member states.

At the same time, it is difficult to talk about full convergence of national foreign policy, but rather about an accommodation with and more flexibility towards the positions of other member states. This is certainly facilitated by the constant exchange of knowledge and information at European level as part of the socialization process. The second empirical chapter argued that the norms of compromise and consensus-seeking were considered necessary by policy makers from the new member states in order to avoid policy blockage that may result when national preferences are defended too rigidly, without taking into account the interests of the other countries and the EU interest as a whole. Yet, as the sub-case studies of Iraq and Kosovo demonstrated, Europeanization is limited when it comes to core national interests. For this reason, this thesis discussed at length the crucial role played by domestic factors, such as the way in which the national interest and identity are perceived and defined by different political actors and how these differently colour the Europeanization process in various countries.

8.4. Research limitations

The analytical framework of this thesis proved solid and delivered the expected results. However, a couple of aspects merit discussion. One concerns the fieldwork and the use of the interview as a research method. The second refers to the issue of elite socialization.

As previously discussed (pp. 85-6), the fieldwork was conducted in Brussels in December 2007, in Bratislava and Budapest between April and June 2008 and in Bucharest in October 2008. The declaration of Kosovo independence took place in February 2008, a

couple of months after I interviewed national officials in the three permanent representations in Brussels, which meant that the feedback from interviewees could not capture developments at the level of EU working groups and committees during the period following the declaration of independence. From this point of view, a second research trip to Brussels might have provided interesting insights on this matter, different from the feedback from the senior officials in the capitals. Yet resource constraints made a second trip difficult and eventually not feasible. However, the timing for collecting data in Brussels was appropriate. The Kosovo declaration of independence featured high on the EU agenda, the potential implications being a source of great concern. The discussions within working groups and committees reflected this state of mind. It was therefore possible to capture some of the feelings and concerns as expressed by the interviewees. On a slightly different note, the fieldwork took place during the Portuguese presidency, at a time when the EU leaders signed the Lisbon Treaty, ending the painful and uninspired process of constitutionalizing the EU and returning to the traditional treaty-driven integration process.

With regard to the issue of elite socialization, the separation of the target group into two clusters of policy-makers in Brussels and in the capitals raised some difficulties with regard to testing the proposition that socialization affects differently the two categories. It was clear from the very beginning that only using in-depth interviews as a method of data collection would be unlikely to produce reliable data. For this reason, as explained in the methodology chapter (see pp. 76-7), this thesis used triangulation (observation, secondary literature and speeches or interviews analysis) as a way of increasing data validity and reliability.

Question marks can also be raised with regard to the sample of interviewees. For practical reasons, it was not possible to interview more than a few people in the

organizations targeted by research (e.g. PermReps, MFA, PM's Office etc). Searching for people with a senior rank was a way of compensating for this problem. The assumption was that more senior and experienced policy-makers are less reluctant to offer insights into the activity of their organization, in any case speaking more freely than a junior expert would do it. This assumption was valid and the interviewees offered a rich research material for analysis.

Given these observations, the discussion about elite socialization balancing between the logic of consequentiality and that of appropriateness ought to be seen with due caution. However, the chapter on elite socialization offered original empirical material to show how the new context and experiences shaped the perception and behaviour of the policy-makers from the new member states and to examine the question of resilience of national identities as a key factor directing national foreign policy preferences.

8.5. Broader implications

This last section of the concluding chapter sets out the contribution of this research project to the literature on the Europeanization of foreign policy. This thesis contributes to the literature on the Europeanization of foreign policy in three ways. Firstly, it enriches the existing literature on the domestic impact of European integration on foreign policy on the new member states from CEE and by extension the literature on the domestic impact of international organizations or institutions. The second contribution is that the use of the multiple case study research design in this thesis strikes the right balance between idiosyncrasy and universalism, which in turn helps the aim of generalization. Thirdly, it opens the avenue for future research on the relationship between power, interests and identity in the study of Europeanization of foreign policy.

As illustrated in the literature review chapter, the study of the Europeanization of foreign policy has mainly targeted the Western European members of the European Union, although the scope of this literature has moved eastwards during the last few years. As such, not only have new member states become objects of analysis, but also candidate countries or even third countries. Yet, as discussed, this is still an emerging field of research and further empirical material is needed in order to provide a comprehensive picture of what has been the impact of Europeanization on foreign policy of the old and new member states alike. This accumulation of empirical data would offer the possibility of conducting comparative research across a larger number of countries, both old and new member states. The comparative approach may target broad policy trends, concrete institutional analysis or the study of specific foreign policy decisions. Furthermore, it would allow for the consolidation of the Europeanization research agenda, which needs a solid empirical base against which the theoretical assumptions may be tested and alternative methodologies applied. Against this background, the propositions of the Europeanization approach can be reevaluated, refuted and reformulated. This was exactly what this thesis has done. The Europeanization literature targeting the foreign policy of the old member states helped to clarify the approach of this thesis, namely that instead of searching for evidence of convergence, it has to start from the assumption that Europeanization affect in uneven ways foreign policy of the new member states. Moreover, it helped to clarify the argument that the source of variation has to be found not in the converging pressures of the EU, but in domestic centrifugal forces.

Indeed, one of the key and perhaps the most contested assumption of this emerging research agenda is the issue of convergence of national foreign policies (Wong, 2007: 325). In relation to the convergence assumption, this thesis adopted a critical stance. Instead of simply asking whether Europeanization caused convergence, it first looked at

the previous empirical findings, which suggested that a mix of policy convergence in certain areas and persistent divergence in other areas is the most likely outcome of Europeanization rather than full convergence, at least in the case of foreign policy. It should be mentioned here that most of the previous studies looked at a single country's foreign policy in relation to European foreign policy, instead of comparing across several countries, as this thesis did. Based on these initial considerations, this thesis considered that it is more important not to ask whether the national foreign policies are converging and to try to find empirical findings in this direction. Instead, the question asked was why there are differences and what factors account for this variation, in short, why is Europeanization associated with divergent national responses. Therefore, as suggested by some recent assessments of the state of the art in the Europeanization research (Radaelli and Pasquier, 2007: 40, Wong, 2007: 332), this thesis made the correct step in the direction of searching for alternative explanations instead of simply ascribing a causal role to the Europeanization process. As previously discussed, the impact of Europeanization was contrasted with the role played by governmental politics and national identity politics.

This thesis also contributes to the wider literature on the domestic impact of international institutions. There are countless studies examining the impact of international regimes, international norms of various kind (e.g. respects for human rights), or international organizations (e.g. NATO, the United Nations, regional organizations), on the behaviour of states (and/or sub-state actors) in the international system. One example is the study mentioned in the methodological chapter about the socialization influence of NATO over Czech and Romanian officials (see p. 76). At the same time, the two domestic factors used in this thesis to explain the differentiated impact of Europeanization are likely to perform well in a different scenario of top-down interaction between an international entity and national foreign policy. It is likely that governmental politics and national identity

politics would account fairly well for divergent national responses in the case of other external pressures. This is a safe assumption insofar as other international organizations are far less integrated or cohesive than the EU, which is an exceptional form of international cooperation, given the depth of the integration process and the extent to which member states, willingly or not, have ended up gradually surrendering chunks of national sovereignty. Hence, the contribution rests on the fact that the role of governmental politics and national identity politics may account for the differentiated influence of any given international organization on the way in which national positions are formulated. Certainly, there are considerable differences between other international organizations and the EU. No international institution organized as an intergovernmental framework of interstate cooperation has exhibited to date the ambition of building a common foreign policy. At the same time, As Reuben Wong underlined (2007: 333), the fact should not be overlooked that Europeanization is ultimately driven by European integration, which can be ultimately traced back to the political and economic imperatives of coordinated action between the member states.

The second contribution of this study comes from the research design and selection of cases. The analytical and methodological chapters explained at length why the multiple case study research design was considered the most likely to produce a satisfactory explanation of how Europeanization has changed foreign policy and foreign policy-making in the new member states and why there is cross-country variation. A potential option for a single case study research design would have made the why question of this thesis irrelevant. It would have been impossible to examine the question of divergence in the absence of cross-country comparison. Only by comparing it is possible to identify differences between countries. This is not to say that the multiple case study design of this thesis is in itself innovative insofar as other authors used it, most notably Ben Tonra in his

influential study of the Europeanization of Danish, Dutch and Irish foreign policies (see also the literature review chapter, p. 21). Yet, this is more the exception than the norm. From this point of view, this thesis has not only enriched the general literature on the Europeanization of foreign policy, but also added to the collection of multiple case-studies types of research design on similar topics.

The choice of this kind of design was correct for at least two reasons. First, the number of countries (three) was small enough not to hinder the process of data collection, while still allowing for cross-country comparison. Secondly, the selection of countries (Hungary, Slovakia and Romania) offered an excellent testing ground for the assumption of this thesis. This was not only because of their accession record (which was one of the criterion for selection), but also due to the specific historical and geographical circumstances linking the three countries together. As illustrated throughout this thesis, the presence of ethnic Hungarians in Slovakia and Romania was and still is a critical factor affecting in intricate ways national identification in all three countries and the political preferences of political parties in government. The same issue of ethnic Hungarians was at times played similarly, and at other times differently, in Slovakia and Romania.

At the same time, the empirical analysis of the position of the three countries on the challenging issue of Kosovo's declaration of independence is a distinct contribution of this thesis. Although there is no shortage of studies about this event, the focus is especially on the legal implications for the international order (with reference to other secessionist regions) and security. Less attention has been paid to date to the stance of the new member states of the EU within the EU context (the search for a common position against the background of contradictory and competing national preferences). The fact that political forces, except for the political representatives of the Hungarian minorities, in Slovakia and Romania opposed the independence of Kosovo says a lot about the link between national

identity and foreign policy preferences. Besides, it demonstrated that the otherwise different ideologies and policy preferences of mainstream political parties converge when the perception and definition of national interest becomes securitized (although the security threat was linked to the international legal norms rather than to national security per se).

Moreover, it was useful to examine the two instances of Kosovo's declaration of independence and the NATO's intervention against Yugoslavia a decade before. The context was important. Despite the popular misgivings about NATO airstrikes, the governments of Slovakia and Romania decided to support these actions as a way to speed their accession into NATO and the EU. One decade later, as full members of the two organizations, they decided to pursue the national interest rather than European integration (a common European position on this matter). In both the 1999 and 2008, the international legality of the two actions was highly disputed. Yet, the international status of the two countries was different and this led to different, more assertive, stances. By contrast, although Yugoslavia and after that Serbia had a direct border with Hungary, and despite concerns for the fate of kin-Hungarians in Vojvodina, the government in Budapest stood alongside NATO, in 1999, and the EU, in 2008. The perception and definition of the national interest meant that siding with NATO in 1999 and the EU, in 2008, was more beneficial for the Hungary as a country and for the Hungarian minority in Vojvodina on the long run. Therefore, all three cases showed that there is a link between the definition of the national interest and self-identification, which transcended inter-party competition (again, with the notable exception, which confirms the rule, of the Hungarian organizations in Slovakia and Romania).

The third contribution of this thesis is that it brought back the notions of power and interests to the study of Europeanization of foreign policy. Most studies of Europeanization of foreign policy are conducted from an institutionalist and/or social constructivist

perspective. While the first is focused on the adaptation of the formal institutional structures to the requirement of functioning within the EU, the latter is concerned with the processes of socialization into the new norms and rules of the EU. Certainly, both approaches are building blocks of this thesis as well. The point was made clear several times throughout this thesis with regard to the importance of using similar analytical categories in view of empirically expanding the Europeanization research agenda.

However, different from other studies, this thesis also turned to examining how the perception of power affects the process of Europeanization and how the perception of national interest changed with accession. The empirical findings suggest that both concepts merit more attention. Europeanization, as a top-down approach, has an inherent component of power, in which one party, the EU, exerts a certain degree of influence over the other, the candidate or the new (or old) member state. At the same time, the issue of competing national interests needs to be brought back into the Europeanization research agenda. As Christopher Hill remarked a decade ago, all EU member states have to a greater or lesser extent distinct interests, which limit or even hinder the convergence of national foreign policies (Hill, 1997: 36-7).

This is not to deny the progress made in the further institutionalization of foreign policy cooperation at EU level. The entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty certainly opened up great expectations about the future of the CFSP and the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) of the EU. It is not the aim of this study to review the innovations of the Lisbon Treaty with regard to the streamlining of the decision making process in this field. However, in the light of what has been mentioned above about the resilience of the national interest, it is worth highlighting the fact that the major winners are the national governments and not the supranational institutions in Brussels. Certainly, the process of Brusselization of foreign policy (defined as a steady increase in the Brussels-based

decision-making bodies, see Allen, 1998: 42) is likely to be boosted by the creation of the European External Action Service under the coordination of Baroness Catherine Ashton as the first High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (also Vice-President of the Commission). The shifting balance of institutional power from the European Commission as the engine of European integration towards the European Council (now having its own budget and president),¹⁴³ confirms the assertiveness of national governments in reining in the integration process. The inter-institutional competition in Brussels has not been eased by the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty, quite the contrary (Mayhew, 2010: 2).

On the other hand, the question of whether a European foreign policy can evolve from the expansion of foreign policy institutions in Brussels is as valid as ever. As David Allen remarked in the aftermath of the ratification of the Amsterdam Treaty in 1999, a European foreign policy cannot be created in Brussels in the absence of defining and pursuing the European interest by the national governments of the EU member states themselves (Allen, 1998: 57). Ten years later, the fundamental question is still the same. The ambiguity of EU foreign policy results exactly from the absence of a shared European interest. Despite the growing institutionalization of foreign policy cooperation, the key problem of defining and agreeing on what is the common European interest is unresolved and emerges forcefully in external crises. The failure to forge a common position in the abovementioned case of Kosovo's declaration of independence is but one, albeit recent, illustration from a long range of examples which highlight the difficulty of agreeing of what the European interest is.

¹⁴³ This observation was made by Jörg Monar and Lucia Serena Rossi at the conference 'The European Union after the Lisbon Treaty', Brussels, 25th May 2010 (see EU Observer, "European Council seen as winner under Lisbon Treaty", 27th May 2010).

Against this background, the Europeanization research agenda needs to ponder more seriously the role of perceptions (individual, group and national) with regard to the way in which power and influence are distributed and exercised within the EU. In addition, it needs to ponder the modalities in which these factors affect the process of Europeanization and strengthen the perception that the pursuit of national interest is legitimate and beneficial even if the common European interest is undermined. From this point of view, the Europeanization of foreign policy research agenda might benefit by bringing back well-established psycho-cognitive approaches to foreign policy analysis, such as operational codes, cognitive maps or roles. For instance, the learning approach, also derived from the psycho-cognitive approaches to FPA, has been employed in this thesis in order to study the issue of the socialization of foreign policy makers. Potentially, the major benefit would be the fact that there is already a substantive scholarship on these approaches, tested on various other cases and in other historical circumstances. On the other hand, the study of Europeanization of foreign policy is a new research agenda, searching not only for empirical materials from all countries affected or potentially affected by Europeanization, but also for new analytical approaches, including those generated during the behaviourist era in the study of foreign policy.

To sum up, this thesis has provided empirical evidence from new, less researched cases, using a multiple case-study research design that balanced between local specificity and the potential to generalize the findings, and opened up new avenues for research by highlighting the role of power and interest inherent in the process of foreign policy Europeanization.

Annex 1 - List of interviews

Interviews with Hungarian officials and experts

- **Balázs, Péter**, Director of the Centre for EU Enlargement Studies of the Central European University (former Secretary of State for European Affairs, Permanent Representative of Hungary to the EU, and Minister of Foreign Affairs), 19 June 2008.
- **Juhász, László**, Head of the Secretariat of the Committee on European Affairs, National Assembly of Hungary, 12 June 2008.
- **Kantor, Zoltan**, Research Fellow, Hungarian Institute of International Affairs, 12 June 2008.
- **Karoli, Sardi**, Counsellor in charge of Western Balkans Working Group (COWEB), Hungarian Permanent Representation to the EU, 14 December 2007.
- **Molnar, Sandor**, Minister Counsellor, Head of External Policy Unit (Deputy PSC), Hungarian Permanent Representation to the EU, 12 December 2007.
- **Pataki, Zsolt**, Head of the CFSP Department, MFA, 16 June 2008.
- **Rácz, András**, research fellow, Hungarian Institute of International Affairs, 12 June 2008.
- **Revfy, Tivadar**, Head of Unit, EU Coordination and Legal Affairs Department, MFA, 13 June 2008.
- **Szucs, Mariann**, Deputy Head of the EU Coordination and Legal Affairs Department, 16 June 2008.

Interview with Slovak officials and experts

- **Ballek, Ladislav**, ESDP Coordinator, Representative in PMG, Slovak Permanent Representation to the EU, 12 December 2007.

- **Bilčík, Vladimír**, Senior Researcher, Slovak Foreign Policy Association, 24 April 2008
- **Duleba, Alexander**, Director of the Slovak Foreign Policy Association, 28 April 2008
- **Jurisová, Katarína**, 3rd Secretary in charge of Western Balkans Working Group (COWEB) and the Stability Pact, Slovak Permanent Representation to the EU, 12 December 2007.
- **Kicinova, Eva**, Head of the Department for European Affairs, Chancellery of the National Council of the Slovak Republic, 19 May 2008.
- **Kirnag, Robert**, Director of the EU General Affairs and Institutions, MFA, 28 April 2008
- **Kukan, Eduard**, Member of the National Council, former minister of foreign affairs of the Slovak Republic, 21 May 2008.
- **Madrova, Gabriela**, Counsellor, Department for European Affairs, Chancellery of the National Council of the Slovak Republic, 19 May 2008.
- **Mesežnikov, Grigorij**, Chairman of Institute for Public Affairs, 21 May 2008.
- **Otruba, Albin**, European Correspondent, CFSP Department, MFA, 2 May 2008.
- **Sveda, Tomas**, Adviser, Section of European Affairs, Prime-Minister Office, 30 April 08
- **Wlachovsky, Miroslav**, Head of the Strategic Planning Directorate, MFA, 22 May 2008.

Interviews with Romanian officials

- **Anghel, Gheorghe**, Charge d'Affaires ad interim, Embassy of Romania to the Slovak Republic, 29 April 2008.

- **Badea, Bogdan**, Head of the Directorate for coordinating positions for the internal market, Department for European Affairs, PM Cabinet. 22 October 2008.
- **Ciobanu, Maria**, Counsellor of State, Department of International Relations, Presidential Administration, 30 October 2008.
- **Hobjilă, Doru**, 3rd Secretary in charge of Western Balkans Working Group (COWEB), Romanian Permanent Representation to the EU, 11 December 2007.
- **Iliescu, Ioana**, deputy head, Directorate for EU Policies, MFA, 21 October 2008.
- **Neacșu, Milica**, 1st Secretary, Representative in PMG, Romanian Permanent Representation to the EU, 11 December 2007.
- **Negrilă, Cristian**, 1st Secretary in charge of Western Balkans Working Group (COWEB), Romanian Permanent Representation to the EU, 10 December 2007.
- **Odobescu, Luminița**, Head of the Directorate General European Union, MFA, 21 October 2008.
- **Olimid, Cristian**, Head of the Political Affairs and ESDP Sections, Romanian Permanent Representation to the EU, 10 December 2007.
- **Pușcaș, Vasile**, former Chief Negotiator for Romanian accession to the EU, currently member of the European Affairs Committee of the Romanian Parliament, 28 October 2010.

Annex no. 2 – Interview structure

Introduction - Introducing the topic, briefly explaining the research

Questions related to institutionalization, coordination, and elite socialization

1. Could you briefly present your professional experiences? (e.g. How long have you been working in the MFA, in which departments? What is your international experience? Have you been seconded as national representative to international organizations, or to diplomatic missions abroad? How long have you been dealing with EU affairs and which aspects in particular?)
2. I would like to ask you few questions about the period following the signing of the accession treaty to the EU, since your country became an active observer and started participating to all Council's meetings. For a start, have you been involved in the process of reorganization of the MFA and Permanent Representation in Brussels, in view of membership? If yes, in what way, what was your (your team) contribution?
3. Could you describe how the EU (CFSP / Relex / ESDP etc) department is organized, what is its place in the overall architecture of the MFA, what are its main tasks?
4. Have you participated in EU Council's meetings at political (or technical level)?
 - 4.1. If yes, how often and what was your status?
 - 4.2. What was your first impression, how would you describe your own views about the working methods, length and format of meetings? I refer to the effectiveness in coming to an agreement on a decision for instance.
 - 4.3. What would you see as an improvement in this sense? Do you think that the number of member states around the table is a factor impeding the effective decision-making within Council's working groups?

5. Have you had the feeling that the working procedures in the Council were something new, different from how other international organizations work? If yes, in what sense? Have you had the feeling that you have to learn new procedures in order to contribute and participate effectively in the policy-making process once a full member?
 6. At the same time, during the period your country had observer status, preparing for membership, the interaction between MFA and the Permanent Representation has been increasing in the sense that you started receiving information on policy initiatives discussed in Council's working groups and committees. I think it was something new for both the Representation and the MFA, so I would be interested in your experience in this sense. How would you describe this iterative process of communication between capital and Representation in Brussels?
 7. If to describe the working style in the EU department, or in the MFA, do you think that the civil servants come up with their own initiatives and proposals, based on their expertise, acting in an anticipatory way? Are they encouraged to assume responsibilities? Or do they rather expect instructions or orders from higher policy levels before acting? In other words, would you describe the process as being guided top-down by the senior or political levels of decision-making, or based on a bottom-up input from expert to political level?
- 7.1. Is this working style characterizing the relationship between the Permanent Representation in Brussels and the EU Department in the MFA? Do they expect instructions from MFA before acting or they rather suggest what the official position should be? My question would be what is the extent to which the official position is defined in Brussels? Or, how much of it is defined in Brussels and how much in the MFA?

8. Do you think that the position of the national representatives in the Council's working groups and committees tends to be more compromise-oriented, even if this sometimes comes up against the instructions from capitals? To be more precise, do you think that being in Brussels, meeting other national representatives in the Council so often, both formally and informally, so, because of that do they tend to take more into consideration the interests of other member states, of the General Secretariat of the Council, or the Commission, than if they were in the MFA, back in the capital?

Questions related to the problem of foreign policy content and action

1. I would turn now to a different problem. Do you think that the CFSP is a platform for the promotion of the national interests of the EU's member states (especially the major countries) or it is based on a genuine need to defend and project a European common interest in the world? If the former, could you provide some examples? If the latter, what is this common European interest?
2. What would you see as beneficial for the CFSP: more integration along community lines, and a greater role for the Commission or the preservation of the role of the member states?
3. The scope of the EU foreign policy is quite broad, probably far beyond the traditional interest, mainly regional, of most member states. Based on that, my question is if you think that EU policies toward remote part of the world are transforming your country's foreign policy and in what way?

I would like to move now to the last part of this interview and to ask you few questions about the EU position on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

4. First, why do you think the Kosovo declaration of independence from Serbia was so divisive within the EU Council of Ministers despite the fact that stability and security

in the Western Balkans is the aim of all individual member states? Why did some countries support it and others didn't?

5. What were the arguments backing your country position within the EU Council of Ministers when Kosovo declared its independence from Serbia?

5.1. Do you think that a different government, of the opposition, would have adopted the same position?

5.2. As far as you know, what is the opinion of the public; is it along the official position of the country or is it rather divided?

6. I think that an important factor in the final decision was the way other EU member states have reacted, as well as United States and Russia. How much was the position of your country decided by considering their options? For instance, if all EU member states were in favour of supporting independence, what would have been the position of your country¹⁴⁴?

7. Do you see any similarity between the way your country reacted to NATO's military intervention in 1999 against Serbia and the Kosovo's declaration of independence this year? In both cases the back-up of the United Nations was missing. How much do you think the prospect of membership in NATO and the European Union weighted in the decision to support Western partners in 1999? Given that the membership in both organizations is a reality now, do you think that your country can define and defend its national interests without being constraint by the political pressures and conditionality associated with the accession process?

Concluding the interview, reiterating how I intend to use the information, pointing out ethical considerations, securing support for other interviews (if necessary).

¹⁴⁴ The question devised in this way is not for interviews in Hungary, only for Romania and Slovakia.

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